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Glen A. Pierce

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evangelical

VISITOR

June 1990

"My children need the legacy of a dad whose life is directed by a clear purpose."



"They must see more than just an effective executive managing daily demands."

Conference on ministry planned for Spring 1991

Broadly speaking, ministry is the performance of service for another. More specifically in the church, ministry is religious service. In the context of the Brethren in Christ "Conference on Ministry," the primary focus is on those persons who invest their lives in serving congregations as spiritual leaders.

The Conference on Ministry, scheduled for April 25-27, 1991, is planned by the Board for Ministry and Doctrine—with a variety of purposes in view:

- to give visibility to the ministry as vocation,
- to define the concept of the call and give opportunity for response,
- to probe the differing styles of ministry and identify certain distinctives about a Brethren in Christ approach,
- to enhance the role of the Board for Ministry and Doctrine and Board

of Bishops as they work with ministers and ministry,

- to introduce a book on ministry that will represent Brethren in Christ history, thinking, and practice and serve as a valuable resource for all who serve us in ministry.

Hosted by the Lancaster, Pa., congregation and open to all who have interest, the conference will begin on Thursday evening, April 25, and continue through Saturday evening, April 27. Friday and Saturday daytime activities will include workshops, the presentation of papers, and other formats for dialogue and study. The three evenings will feature messages of inspiration and challenge.

The book on ministry (to be released at conference and not yet titled) includes 18 chapters by men and women of the Brethren in Christ Church. There are three divisions: historical, theological, and practical. Dr. E. Morris Sider is editing the book, which will have one or more chapters presented as conference papers. ■

Kansas in September

Writers' conference scheduled for fall

The biennial Mennonite Writers' Conference will come to the Midwest this year. Around 200 participants are expected to attend the weekend event, which will be held Sept. 21-23 at the Cross Wind Conference Center in Heston, Kan.

Sponsored by Meetinghouse, a Mennonite and Brethren in Christ editors' group, the conference is open to anyone interested in learning more about writing and publishing. Previous conferences were held in Oregon and Pennsylvania.

Planners hope this year's event will help beginning and veteran writers to improve their skills and encourage them to use those skills as a ministry for the church.

"Whether you write for a newsletter or a newspaper, for pay or for pleasure, for church or community, poetry or



General Conference Information

The deadline for registration is past. If you plan to attend General Conference and have somehow overlooked registering, call Paul Hostetler, (717) 697-2634, and give him the information requested on FORM A (Deadline June 1). His home number is (717) 766-2621. (Registration forms were printed in the January 1990 *Visitor*; additional copies were mailed to each pastor.)

If you need transportation from the Harrisburg airport, call Jim Hess, (717) 790-9670, and give him all the information requested on FORM B. The FORM B deadline was also June 1.

Full refunds will be given if cancellations are made to the Registrar, Paul Hostetler, before June 25. No refunds after that date except in emergencies. Because of postal delays, please make any cancellations or changes after June 15 by phone.

Registration at Conference will be in the Sollenberger Sports Center on Fri-

day evening, June 29, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., and on Saturday morning from 8:00 to noon. All persons, including those in pre-conference sessions, will register for General Conference at the above times. If you are not able to go through the registration line yourself, please have someone do it for you.

If you arrive on Saturday, please do so by 10:00 a.m. so that registration can be completed by noon. *Voting members of Conference will need to attend all business sessions unless excused by the General Secretary or the Moderator.*

You are encouraged to attend an area Brethren in Christ Church on Sunday morning. If you need transportation, you should request it ahead of time to be assured of a ride.

All men, women, and children attending Conference must register on FORM A. And all persons 18 and over, attending day sessions, should pay the registration fee. The only exceptions are those attending evening sessions only.

If your agency desires to be included in the registration process on Friday and Saturday at Conference, please contact the Convention Director.

You will be able to check into your room upon arrival. Go to the Information Booth in the main lobby of Eisenhower Campus Center for your room assignment. *Those arriving at unusual hours* should inform Dale Wolgemuth, Director of Information Services for the General Conference. *Please note:* He will *not* have the list of room assignments until June 15. You can call him at his home: (717) 766-3006. *From Wednesday afternoon on* (June 27) you will be able to call him at Messiah College, (717) 691-6036. Your room will be open. No keys are being issued to anyone; do not leave valuables in your room. Your linen package will be in your room. If you encounter any problems relating to your room, check in with the Campus Security Office, also in the main lobby of Eisenhower Campus Center. When you check into your room, examine it carefully to see if anything is damaged, broken, or missing. If so, please give details at the Information Booth.

During the whole Conference, the

prose, sermons or prayers, you will find much here that applies to what you have been doing and what you want to do," says Muriel T. Stackley, conference coordinator.

George Neavoll, editorial page editor of the *Wichita (Kan.) Eagle*, will be the keynote speaker at the opening session on Friday evening. He will address the topic, "Make them think: Writing for the video generation." Neavoll is an award-winning journalist and has traveled extensively throughout the world. He was a Peace Corps volunteer in India during the 1960s.

In addition to Neavoll, the program will include workshops on a wide range of topics, worship sessions, entertainment, and opportunities to become acquainted with Mennonite editors and writers.

Anyone wanting more information and a registration form can write to Mennonite Writers' Conference, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. ■

dining room at Messiah College will be undergoing major changes. Due to this construction, our seating capacity will be somewhat limited, causing us to extend the meal times by one half hour per meal time. The first time this happens is on Saturday. The noon meal will begin at 11:00 a.m. This early time is necessary because the first business session is scheduled for 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, June 30.

If you need to leave a phone number behind while you are at General Conference, the General Conference number will be (717) 691-6036. Your call will go directly to our Information Booth. If the Information Booth is closed, the call will automatically go to the 24-hour Campus Security personnel and they will notify the proper person.

For more information, check previous issues of the *Evangelical Visitor*, starting with January, or consult the printed program. You can also contact Ken Mark, Convention Director, 304 Berkshire Rd., Grantham, PA 17055. Phone: (717) 766-8914. You may leave a recorded message. ■

evangelical VISITOR

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A father's legacy

by John Cionca

We'd been robbed! Returning home from a three-week vacation, we found cupboards opened, appliances moved, the basement door ajar. The usual sense of welcome and rest in our house was swept away by the uneasy, sinking feeling of loss as we catalogued the missing belongings.

A call to my insurance agent revealed my coverage would replace the clock radio, telephone, and jewelry boxes the burglars carried away in a pillowcase. Unfortunately, no kind of coverage could replace the personal items that were gone.

My high school and college rings—I hadn't worn them for more than a decade, but had saved them faithfully for my children, Ben and Betsy. A collection of bicentennial silver dollars, halves, and quarters. A medicine bottle filled with Ben's baby teeth, everyone except the one he swallowed—we'd systematically col-

lected them to present as a gift when his own children began teething.

As I reflected on those priceless losses, my thoughts turned to my children's remaining time at home. In eight years Ben will pack his things for college; a year later Betsy will follow. Soon after that they may marry, or move to another part of the country. I asked myself, What legacy do I really want to leave my children?

More than rings or coins or baby teeth. My honest desire was to leave them a greater part of myself. I wanted their legacy to include some examples, characteristics, and experiences that will last them a lifetime. I want them to have:

A dad of prayer

I remember as a child seeing my mother sitting on the edge of her bed, reading her Bible. Similarly, etched on my mind is the image of my father kneeling beside his bed in prayer before retiring each evening. Prayer has been a rich part of my heritage.

As Ben and Betsy get older, they

will also benefit from a dad whose prayer life is visible. I'm not advocating a pharisaical practice to impress some spectator, but I am becoming more intent upon providing opportunities for my children to see me, other adults, and even older teens in prayer.

Our family gives thanks together before meals, and we pray faithfully each night before the children retire. But recently I also drew them close at appropriate moments to pray for Auntie Bonnie in the hospital, Mom at her meeting, and a crisis on the news.

A dad of purpose

Last week I changed brake pads, fixed a toilet, sealed the driveway, and hung wallpaper. There's nothing wrong with getting the most out of each day. In fact, the Bible tells us that there is a time for everything under the sun. Housework is important, recreation is beneficial, but in the midst of all my worthwhile activities, I must remember the words: "Beware of the barrenness of a busy life."

My children need the legacy of a

The author is Dean of Students and Christian Education Professor at Bethel Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., and has written several books and magazine articles.

dad whose life is directed by a clear purpose. They must see more than just an effective executive managing daily demands. While a treat at the Dairy Queen is a good investment, they also need to see my check written for world relief. While playing catch in the backyard is enjoyable, they must also sense the joy I feel when praising God in a spontaneous song.

I want Ben and Betsy to recognize the overarching purpose in my life, the primary goal which gives meaning to daily particulars. Whether we're playing trumpets, painting a widow's house, or helping at the church work day, I hope they discover my main purpose in life is to honor God through praise and service.

A dad of patience

We have all heard the terms introvert and extrovert. I have another way of categorizing people: the dictators and the wimps. I tend to err toward the dictator extreme.

Every one of my tools has a proper place on the workbench, and I'm ready to court-martial any kid who misplaces them. I expect neat manners, courteous speech, clean bedrooms, and acts of kindness showered between my 9-year-old and 11-year old. In other words, I expect perfect kids.

But that's obviously unrealistic. No child will ever be perfect. A parent cannot ignore problems, nor should we avoid corrective discipline. However, we can guard our reactions.

My children need to experience peace with God, peace with each other, peace with their friends, and peace with me. There have been times when I've been upset with the kids because they've "disturbed the peace." Yet honest reflection leads me to admit that too frequently my reaction was more disturbing than their initial infraction.

Recently, Ben and Betsy were an hour and a half late returning home from school. Barb and I were worried and drove through the neighborhood looking for them. We eventually found them playing in the school yard.

My prayer is to leave my children the legacy of a godly father—one who above all else reflects their Father above.

My normal reaction would have included reading them the riot act, with a voice elevated in pitch and decibels. But on this occasion I quietly asked them to go home and subsequently discussed with them the consequences of disobedience.

For Betsy it meant missing her basketball game that evening, for she still had homework, piano lessons, and errands to run. For Ben it meant we would not work on his model airplane, for he too had responsibilities. Surprisingly, their attitudes during the two-day grounding that followed was peaceful. I believe they reflected the patience I had shown.

The legacy I desire for my children includes a father who accepts them, empathizes, and responds with patience.

A dad of play

All too soon our children will begin to drive, date, attend college, and eventually set up their own homes. For now, as children, they enjoy a stage of life that can never be recaptured. While each of our kids has school and household responsibilities, we want to guard for them in their childhood years the freedom for creative play.

Ben may not get his baby teeth in a bottle, but he will remember launching his rockets, and playing frisbee in the cul-de-sac. Betsy won't receive our rings, but she may recall the bike rides around Lake Johanna, the games of "PIG" on the driveway

basketball court, and the times in the front yard when she'd say: "Dad, warm me up for soccer." I want to leave my children the memories of a dad who was fun.

A dad of praise

I'm amazed at how often people complain. I'm amazed at how often Christians complain. I'm amazed at how often I complain! I cannot think of a greater insult to God than to gripe with the mouth he has created for praise. The seriousness of Israel's wilderness wanderings reminds us of God's hatred of complaining.

As a parent, I frequently complain about things in my children's lives. My motivation is sincere. I want them to grow up with good attitudes and habits. I am embarrassed, however, by how often I use negative, corrective speech, compared to the amount of praise I give them.

Some days it's hard to find something worth commending. Nevertheless, if I want my children to praise rather than complain, they need a dad who leaves them a legacy of praise.

Ben and Betsy will live up to my view of them. Therefore I must notice and commend their actions that are wholesome, good, and praiseworthy.

Since our burglary, I've set to work to build a legacy for my children that can never be taken away. I've called Ben to point out a Scripture portion; I've asked Betsy, "Can we talk about it?" when she was having a bad day. I've even endured a horrendous wrestling match in the family room.

There are still times when I tarnish that legacy. But I have determined by God's enabling to leave my children more than jewelry or coins. My prayer is to leave them the legacy of a godly father, one who above all else, reflects their Father above. ■

"Somebody's building our church!"

by Warren Hoffman

Dawn Lynn Clemenceau was riding in the car with her mother. As they drove by our church land, Dawn Lynn exclaimed, "Mom! Somebody's building our church!"

Yes, it is obvious now that our facility is under construction. Excavation has been completed. A portion of the concrete parking lot has been poured. Grass and saplings have been planted in initial landscaping.

But our church—the real church—has been under construction, in homes and rented facilities, for the past ten years. All this time, somebody has been building our church!

Building a people

In 1980 my wife Connie and I, with our daughters, came to Oklahoma City with the assignment to establish a church. To help us, the Lord provided three choice couples: Ira and Ernestine Eyster, Gene and Mary Blessing, and Ed and Mary Strayer.

Together, this church planting team proclaimed a vital Christian

faith with an accent on personal conversion and earnest Christian living. As a result of the team's witness, numbers of unchurched households became participants in our young church: the Freels, Sevetskys, Donaghes, Richersons, Lindens, Tanabes, Lullas, Harrells, Clemenceaus, Stetlers, Munsons, Sutherlands, Sharps, Scotts, Brocks, Chackos, Reeds, Crenshaws, and Guys.

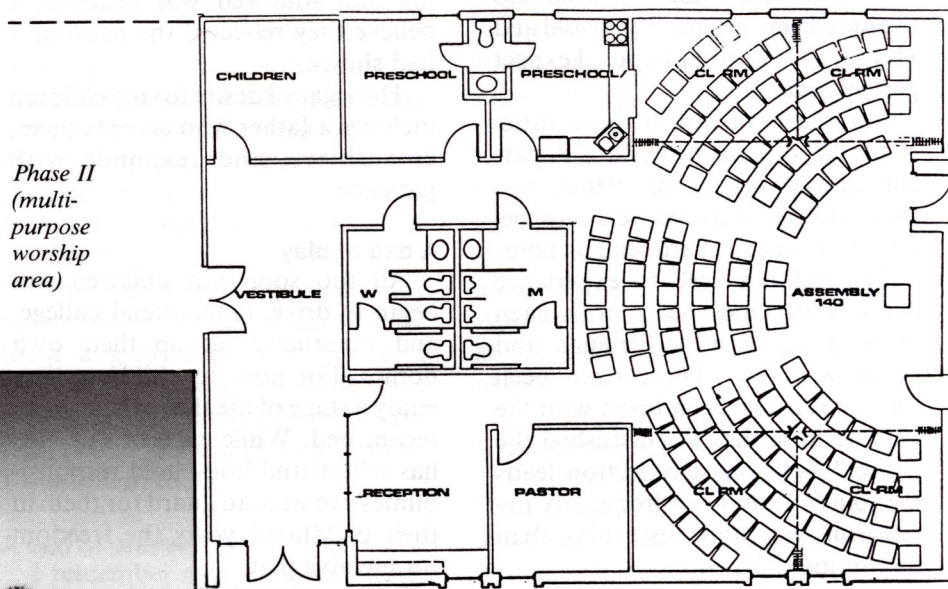
These new and renewed believers have developed into an active, growing church—not bricks and mortar, but a people who worship, study, encourage, care, and witness.

We come together to worship

Almighty God. We put aside the distractions of daily life. We give God praise and thanks. We listen as the Bible is taught, and the truths of Christian faith become clear.

We experience the life-changing truth of God's Word in Bible study. On Sunday we have classes immediately after the worship service. During the week we have Bible study in a home.

We rejoice in the enthusiasm of our children and youth. Infants and toddlers receive loving care in the secure atmosphere of our nursery. Elementary age children discover God's love, gain a solid knowledge of the Bible, and develop positive



Phase II
(multi-
purpose
worship
area)



Above: Phase I of the Oklahoma City church building project. Phase II, the larger building in the foreground of the artist's rendering (left), will be built later.

Opposite page: Working together on the parking lot.



self-esteem in Sunday school and children's musicals. Teen are excited and challenged in Bible studies, social activities, youth camps, and mission projects.

We experience personal and family growth in a friendly, Christ-centered environment. Helpful seminars and film series are presented to strengthen individuals and households. In addition, there are year-round activities which involve the entire family.

Most exciting, we are active partners in the venture of building a church. Scores of persons pray daily for our church. Our teachers meet every Wednesday evening for Bible study and training. Our evangelistic team is actively reaching out to unchurched persons.

As a result, we are experiencing a steady stream of guests in our services and activities. Persons are praying to receive Christ. New persons are attending our services. They are being remade according to God's Word. They are being redirected into his service. With all of this, our people are thriving—as the Lord intends. Somebody is building our church!

Building for outreach

Yet we have barely scratched the surface! Almost one million persons live in the six contiguous counties

that comprise the Greater Oklahoma City area. Even though Oklahoma has been characterized as part of the "Bible belt," only half of these persons have any church affiliation according to current statistics. By our own observation and informal surveys, even fewer are in church on any given Sunday. That means that half a million persons in the Greater Oklahoma City area are unchurched and most likely unsaved.

Our aim is to reach these unchurched persons. Our "marching orders" from the Lord Jesus are to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20).

To fulfill our purpose to "make disciples" among unchurched persons in our community, we worship, study, encourage, care, and witness. To enhance the effectiveness of these essentials, we want to construct a building. A permanent facility will enable us to meet the needs—and expectations of unchurched persons in our community.

Building a building

In 1983 we explored the feasibility of purchasing land, and bumped up against soaring prices. Everywhere we looked, prices were far beyond

our capacities as a young congregation. Yet the Lord gave us the faith to establish a building fund and to begin our search for property.

As persons in our congregation, throughout the Midwest, and across the country gave, our fund swelled to \$150,000. We authorized negotiations up to this amount.

In 1985 we began negotiations on a fine property. A developer wanted \$200,000. Our limit was \$150,000 and we broke off negotiations. We seemed to be stymied.

Later, the developer came back to us with a price of \$150,000! Recognizing that Oklahoma's sagging economy was bringing land prices down, we countered that with an offer of \$130,000. In November 1986, our proposal was accepted.

We might have purchased this land earlier for \$200,000. If we had borrowed money to do this, our building fund would have been depleted. We would have been in debt. Because we had the patience to "live within our means" and wait for the Lord's timing, we were able to purchase the land at a much better price, without any debt, and with money left in our building fund!

In 1988 we developed a total site plan for our land. We agreed that our building should be attractive, a visible invitation for persons to consider coming to our church. At the same time, we wanted to conserve costs by building in phases and by planning multiple use of space.

We unanimously approved the plan prepared by our architect and building committee to be a guide for future development projects. In addition, we voted to develop landscaping and parking in advance of building construction—so we could have special events and outreach activities on our land while we continued to raise money.

These initial construction projects were completed in 1989. In June a local contractor began excavation, fill, and compacting. In July another

How has being a Christian changed my life?

Sheri, Julie and
Brian Rogers

by Sheri Rogers

In order to answer this question, I need to let you know what my life was like *before* I became a Christian.

I grew up with three sisters and one brother in an upper middle class home. My father was a good provider but an alcoholic. My mother was very loving and "devoted" to her children. As a child, I was the placater in the family—trying to make everything "OK" so then maybe my father wouldn't drink.

Religion was never a part of our family. Although my mother was raised Catholic and chose to baptize my two older sisters as such, my father was an agnostic. I was always "curious" about religion and enjoyed looking at the pictures in a large family Bible.

Growing up in a neighborhood where Catholicism was the predominant religion, I was subject to verbal abuse by other children because I was not baptized and didn't belong to any religion. I was told that I was "going to hell" when I died. I worried about this as a child and thought maybe if I prayed enough I could be just as worthy.

My nightly bedtime prayers as a child got me through many sleepless nights when my father would come home drunk. I always felt "protected" if I were laying in bed talking to God. I often fell asleep while praying, because it took me so long to include *everyone* I loved and cared about.

As I got older, I envied those friends of mine whose families went

to church on Sunday. I had a few experiences of going to various churches with friends; however, I was very intimidated because of my lack of knowledge about religion. And I was afraid of these "good church-going" people finding out our "family secret." I could not trust anyone to know the "real me."

After seven years of marriage, I realized the pattern of my life and living in an alcoholic environment had to be broken. I did not want my son to become an alcoholic nor my daughter to marry one. I made a decision to change the only way of life I knew.

Once I got out of the environment of living with an alcoholic, I thought my life would finally be blissful. Little did I know that I was about to face the hardest challenge of all, raising two children on my own.

After my divorce, I moved to Phillips Ranch and enrolled my children in Youth World. That is when I met my dear friend Karla, who has played an enormous part in leading me to Christianity. Karla invited me to church several times, but I wasn't comfortable with the idea. A year later, I was introduced to Pastor Perry and started attending group meetings for Adult Children of Dysfunctional Families. I had just broken up a four-year relationship with my boyfriend and I knew I once again needed direction in my life to cope. When I learned there was going to be a "pastor" helping to facilitate these meetings, I was a bit intimidated by this, but I trusted Karla's judgment and felt drawn to be a part of this new group. Upon meeting Pastor Perry I couldn't help realize how "normal" and down to earth he

seemed. He wasn't the ultra-holy figure I had envisioned, and was so intimidated by as a youngster. At the end of our first group meeting, Pastor Perry announced he was going to read from the Bible. I immediately panicked, I thought, oh no, he's going to start yelling and preaching at me because he knows all of my sins. But instead, his readings touched my heart and I knew I had found a group of people who understood where I was coming from and actually *accepted* me.

After several group meetings, I got the courage to come to church. Me—a divorced mother with two kids, who don't always behave. Walking into a congregation full of unknown faces and wanting to be accepted was a very scary thing. But halfway through the service, through the warmth and friendliness I felt, I realized I had finally found a comfortable place to worship God and share in his love.

And now, to finally answer that question: how has being a Christian changed my life? It has brought me some wonderful friendships and helped me appreciate life so much more. It has brought me more peace in my life than I have ever felt, and taken away so much pain. Being a Christian has given me a sense of stability in my life and helped me to enjoy my children and realize how important they are to me.

During many difficult times in parenting, I talk to God and ask him for the composure, love, and patience I need to deal with my children.

Accepting the Lord into my life has helped me to accept and like myself. It has helped me to forgive and ease the pains of emotional suf-

Sheri Rogers shared this testimony recently with the New Community Brethren in Christ Church in Pomona, Calif., where Perry Engle and Kent Byer are co-pastors.



fering, and most importantly, to "TRUST." I have learned to depend on the Lord for my strength and guidance in overcoming stressful times. And believing in him has eased the loneliness of being single, because I know he is always there.

As a single parent, becoming a Christian has had a very positive effect on my life and my children's. It has exposed Brian and Julie to so much love and caring, and has directed me towards choosing more quality in my life and personal relationships.

So as a "baby Christian," I am still growing, but it's comforting to know that as I continue my journey with God, and possibly stumble along the way, I will still be loved and accepted by him.

While putting all these feelings together, I have realized that God *has* been working in my life for quite some time. It's just recently that I accepted that fact, and wanted to act upon it.

Several weeks ago, my daughter and I had the misfortune of getting food poisoning. During the routine paperwork prior to admittance into the emergency room, I was asked the once dreaded question, "What is your religion?" This time, I was able to respond proudly, . . . "I'm a Christian." ■

contractor poured the curb, gutter, and approach for a portion of our parking lot. Then a concrete contractor from the Bethany congregation in Thomas, Okla., directed a crew of volunteers to pour the parking lot.

During the parking lot project our congregation—and 19 workers who came from other churches—mobilized for an outstanding construction effort. Practically all of our church family participated in one way or another. The women provided cold drinks, morning and afternoon snacks, and a hearty noon meal for the workers. Several hosted workers in their homes. Three of our men took vacation time to work on the project. Many came to work on the parking lot—tying reinforcing rods, setting forms, pulling cement into place, leveling it, and smoothing it. When it was all finished, we stood back and rejoiced together, "Somebody's building our church!"

As 1990 began, we had \$120,000 in our building fund. Construction costs for the initial phase of our building were projected at \$165,000. We had agreed to begin construction when *all* the money had been contributed. So we needed \$45,000.

We mobilized to pray for the remaining amount in 1990. In January our church family and friends contributed \$12,000. As we continued to pray, persons gave \$6,000 more in February. In March we received a contribution of \$1,000 and a commitment of \$1,500 in donated labor. Then one of our friends committed the final \$25,000 to our building fund!

As soon as construction drawings are completed and a builder selected, we will begin construction. This initial phase of our building will seat 140 persons for worship. This same area will also be used for fellowship meals, and when the dividers are drawn, for eight classrooms. In addition, there is a nursery, temporary kitchen, office area, and restrooms.

The next phase is to construct an attractive worship area, which will also be used for fellowship meals and adult classes. There will also be a kitchen, two additional classrooms,

and a storage area. At the same time permanent walls will be constructed in the initial phase. An additional \$165,000 will enable us to proceed with this phase two multi-purpose worship area.

In seven years the Lord has accomplished a miracle of faith, generosity, and patience. He has given us five acres of prime land at an excellent location for an exceptionally good price. He has given us a fine parking lot. And now he had provided the full amount needed for the construction of our initial phase.

The builder, Jesus Christ

Who's been building our church? The Lord Jesus Christ has been building his church just as he promised in Matthew 16:18. To bring glory and praise to the Father, he has built a people, a vision for outreach—and soon a building—to call unchurched persons in Oklahoma City to himself.

All the while, God has worked through people. Jesus, the builder, has gathered an original construction crew in the Blessings, Eysters, Hoffmans and Strayers. He has built a people who have pitched in to help as an expanded team of workers. He has miraculously provided land by means of many individual acts of generosity. And he has given us a building fund of \$165,000 as many persons in Oklahoma City, throughout the Midwest, and around the continent have become partners with him. The Lord Jesus Christ is building our church—as we pray, give, and work with him!

Yes, Dawn Lynn, somebody is building our church. It is the Church Builder, Jesus Christ. And he asks you—and all of us—to work with him. So we worship, study, encourage, care, witness, pray and give.

Will you work with the Lord Jesus to build his church where you live and work? ■

This article was adapted from the November 1989 newsletter of the Oklahoma City Brethren in Christ Church, with an updated report on the progress of the building project. Warren Hoffman has been nominated to serve as bishop of the Atlantic regional conference.



Friendliness isn't enough: Do the poor feel welcome in your church?

by Eddy Hall

Their clothes are worn. Their hair-cuts do-it-yourself jobs. Yours is a middle-income congregation, so you wonder: Will this new family [let's call them Ray and Sandra Thompson] feel welcome?

Your concerns are soon put to rest. The members of their Sunday school class go out of their way to be friendly. The family comes back. When the class has a hayride, several people personally invite them to come along.

You are delighted when the Thompsons take their baby forward for dedication. They must be feeling at home.

Then, a couple of weeks later, they quit coming.

What went wrong? Did they not feel welcome after all?

No, as a matter of fact, they didn't. The family who came and stayed awhile and left were friends of my wife, Melody, and me, friends who came to church with us at our invitation.

Of course, I appreciated our classmates' efforts to make our friends, who were obviously poor, feel welcome. Their friendliness was genuine. But friendliness wasn't enough. To truly make the Thompsons feel welcome would have taken something more—a new way of seeing.

Our family began to learn this new way of seeing in 1979 upon return to Oklahoma after three years away. I began work as a free-lance

writer, a job that yields high personal rewards but low and irregular income. We attended the same middle-class church we had attended before, where we had felt so at home. But after attending every Sunday for a year, we still didn't feel a part. Why?

The difference was that we were now poor. We now saw an obstacle course of barriers—all unintentional.

We had never noticed most of these barriers before. Looking back we could see how we ourselves had raised similar barriers as youth leaders in that very church. Only when we saw the church through the eyes of the poor did these barriers become visible.

Barrier #1: A price tag on Christian fellowship

On the evening of our Sunday school class hayride, Ray Thompson was at our house, anguishing over whether to take his family. He wanted desperately to make friends. But the hayride would cost them \$4.50—and they had no milk for their three children.

We would gladly have taken them as our guests, but we had less money than they had. Our family couldn't even consider going.

The time for the hayrack to leave the church came and went, and still Ray debated. He still had time to drive to the farm and meet the class there, though to go now would cost a couple of dollars more for gas. In the end, Ray stayed home that night and bought milk for his children.

The next month our Sunday school class had a social within walking distance of our home. No gas expense. Admission was just \$1 for our whole family. Maybe this time we could go, be included.

But no, it came during a time when our only regular income was the \$70 a week my wife was earning from a part-time Christmas job. During those six weeks we had less than \$15 a week to spend on groceries. One dollar was a lot. We stayed home and used the dollar for baby formula.

This is why, after a year back at our old home church, we still felt like outsiders. Our Sunday school class had frequent socials where we could have renewed our friendships, but three-fourths of them cost money for admission, child care or both.

The leaders of a women's Bible study my wife attended found some creative ways to eliminate financial barriers to participation. The church provided free child care during the Bible study. Once a month, when the small groups ate lunch together, the women brought brown bag lunches rather than going to a restaurant. To take care of the only remaining financial barrier, the \$10 fee for materials, program leaders announced that scholarships were available upon request. Good as far as it went, it raised another barrier.

Barrier #2: Offers of help that hurt

In our society, being poor carries a stigma. Even though Jesus blessed the poor and warned the wealthy,

Eddy Hall is a free-lance writer and editor living in Goessel, Kansas.

the world's attitude of honoring wealth carries over into many churches. To admit to being poor, even in church, is usually humiliating. To admit you can't pay even \$10 for a Bible study notebook is a humiliation few will volunteer for.

To get around this, some groups eliminate fees in favor of suggested donations. This is better, but still less than ideal. When I haven't been able to give the full amount of a suggested donation, I have sometimes come away feeling guilty or even second-class. The challenge, then, is to find ways to share that communicate love and affirm dignity.

Our present congregation does an excellent job of this. While expenses for this year's all-church retreat were covered on a donation basis, no one mentioned a "suggested donation." Instead, the literature mentioned the approximate cost per person but emphasized that *everyone's* participation was wanted. The result: participation was almost as high as Sunday morning worship attendance, and donations covered all expenses.

Barrier #3: Practices that say, You don't belong

Visiting a predominantly middle-income congregation is a cross-cultural—and therefore often uncomfortable—experience for a low-income family. To make the poor feel welcome, a middle-income congregation must become aware of cultural differences and adopt practices that embrace cultural diversity. Three aspects of culture—dress, architecture and social customs—can illustrate this principle.

On the Sunday the Thompsons dedicated their baby we were also dedicating our first child. As I dressed for church that morning, I debated: Should I wear a suit to fit in with most of the other fathers who would be standing before the congregation? Or should I wear a sport shirt in case Ray didn't have a coat and tie? I compromised; I wore a sweater.

Ray showed up without coat or tie. Sandra wore the same dress she had worn the previous six Sundays—no doubt her only Sunday dress. I could imagine how conspicuous they

felt. I hoped what I was wearing made them feel a little less so. But to make them feel truly comfortable, not just one, but many in the congregation would need to consciously dress *not* for success but for comfort—the social comfort of others.

Does this mean banning coats and ties from church? Hardly. That would only make more affluent visitors feel out of place. But when visitors can look around on Sunday morning and find both blue jeans and suits, then no matter how rich or poor they are, they won't feel conspicuous because of their dress.

What about church facilities? Can your building make people feel more or less welcome? Phineas Bresee, a turn-of-the-century pastor and advocate for the poor, thought so. "We want places so plain," he wrote, "that every board will say welcome to the poorest."

When a middle-income congregation in Kansas City found itself in a neighborhood fast becoming low income, it decided to not relocate. It reached out to the changing neighborhood and at first enjoyed only limited success.

When they needed new facilities, they replaced their traditional sanctuary with a sanctinasion—a multipurpose facility where they worshiped on Sundays and played basketball and ate potluck dinners during the week. To their surprise, more neighborhood people started coming. A gymnasium was better than gothic arches and stained glass windows. It was more a part of their culture. The building said, "You are welcome."

Of course, you can't change church architecture overnight. But you can, the next time your church buys, builds, rents or remodels a building, make it a point to ask, Will the facility we're considering welcome the poor?

Finally, how can the social customs of a congregation hinder fellowship?

Once after a move our family spent several months looking for a home church. We began attending one affluent suburban congregation shortly before the annual women's

luncheon. Judging from the description in the church bulletin and the place settings displayed in the church lobby, it was to be quite a formal affair. The price of one ticket was more than I had ever spent on a single meal—more, in fact, than we usually spent for our entire family to eat out.

One woman, trying to make my wife feel welcome, not only invited her to the luncheon but suggested she decorate one of the tables. This required china, crystal and silver for 10, a round linen tablecloth and a centerpiece. She didn't know, of course, that our "china" consisted of five mismatched plastic plates, that our "crystal" consisted of plastic tumblers picked up at the dime store to get us by until we could afford to move our household goods. Her attempt to make my wife feel welcome had just the opposite effect.

The women planning the luncheon evidently had no idea that they were saying to my wife and others, "This luncheon was not planned with you in mind."

Put out the welcome mat

Making the poor feel welcome takes more than friendliness and good intentions. It requires learning to see through their eyes, to examine every aspect of church life through the lens of whether it tends to include or exclude them. To learn to see this way, the church will need to involve the poor in decisions that shape the life of the church body. We will need to become their students, learning from them how to shape policies with cultural sensitivity.

With their help, congregations can find ways to remove the price tags on Christian fellowship, to avoid offers of help that hurt and to modify cultural practices that say to the poor, You don't belong.

As poor and non-poor come together, our life together will demonstrate to the world the gospel's power to break down the walls that divide us, its power to make us one. ■

A CALL TO A SINGLE-HEARTED DEVOTION

They called him a playboy and he lived up to the name. The popular son of a wealthy family, Francis was renown for his costly clothes and enthusiastic partying. By his definition, indulgence was the byword of the day; moderation held no meaning. Life was meant to be enjoyed, and he intended to live it to the fullest.

But the plans he so eagerly laid were arrested by a voice—a voice from God which could not be discounted.

Unable to obliterate the impact of the words, young Francis underwent

a transformation. His peers, his parents, all those whom he had known stood like gaping spectators, unable to comprehend the striking changes of his life. Partying was abandoned, possessions were given away. Francis even took to selling his father's merchandise to spend the money on those in need.

But this was taking his commitment a little too seriously.

Unwilling to watch his son destroy his life, Francis' father responded by confining him to the house and beating him to bring him to his senses. Francis refused to respond. Exasperated, the irate father resorted to his final recourse. Summoned to appear in court, Francis was charged with selling his father's goods and the young man was ordered to repay all losses. Humiliated, Francis re-

turned everything his parents had given him, even the clothes off his back, and in silence turned and walked out of court. Thus began the life of poverty and courageous self-abandonment of Saint Francis of Assisi. All the tinsel and magnetic charms his world had to offer could not alter nor dissuade the wholehearted commitment of this man who became the founder of the Franciscan Order. He had heard the voice of God and nothing could deter him from obeying the gentle yet compelling call.

The story seems dramatic and questions come rushing to mind. What did this young man hear from God to cause such a costly change in his life? What words could conscript him to renounce popularity, wealth and ease for a lifestyle of indignity,

Sandra Gooderham is on the staff of 100 Huntley Street, a Canadian religious television program headquartered in Toronto.

by Sandra Gooderham

poverty, humility? The answer is cloaked in silence. But perhaps our focus needs to be altered.

The source of the redirection of this man's life was not in the words that were spoken, but in the God who was speaking. Herein his vision was transformed and his heart set on fire. The fixed focus of his life gave birth to a commitment to abandon the valuables of earth in favor of the treasures of heaven. Out of this Source he had the strength to renounce his wealth, the compassion to touch a leper, the grace to suffer rejection.

But times have changed—haven't they? God no longer calls for such a commitment—does he? Perhaps to understand service for God we need a fresh glimpse of the God whom we serve.

The visions which Scripture record of God are never explicit in the description of the Divine, but they do reveal details of the reaction of man. Time and again the glory of God brought man to his face, prostrate, and unable to sustain the view. Ezekiel saw and was overwhelmed. Daniel beheld and was appalled. John saw the Lord and fell down as a dead man.

Do we *know* the God we serve? We are brought to stand before the mirror of Scripture to evaluate the reflection of our lives. Having seen God in his glory, does it affect the way we serve? The command of the Gospels resounds from the pages in a call to service marked by singleness—singleness of heart, singleness of sight, singleness of service. Response to this voice cannot be avoided. In the reflection of the mirror, is my service single or divided?

Singleness of heart

Much of Matthew 6 speaks to the condition of the heart and in particular to the treasures contained therein. The point is well made: that which we hold as our treasure will become the obsession of our life. There is no option presented; there are no limitations proffered. The "treasures" spoken of are not restricted to riches. The view extends to include anything in life we trust in and tightly grip. Under this scrutiny comes my family, my home, my career, my spouse, my bank account, my clothes—the emphasis cannot be denied.

Suddenly those "treasures" which appear so harmless are revealed from a new perspective. How firm *is* my hold on them? "But God, they are necessities," I argue. Are they? Do they intrude, however slightly, upon that one allegiance of heart?

How much easier it is to keep those secret treasures hidden, to coddle them inwardly and excuse them outwardly. But at this point the mirror is marred; a stone has disturbed the reflection. The servant of a single heart must press to be pure. To have treasures in heaven is to possess evidence that its purity is ours. Yet for such a pursuit, what is required?

Single-hearted devotion demands dependence. The words come easily. But the value system of our society stresses independence. From birth we are trained to seek it, to push away from those who strive to control or make decisions for us. The message is to stand alone and stand strong. Yet if God is to be central in heart and life, a radical dependence upon him is demanded. The single heart requires the posture of dependence. Divine-human dialogue is based upon this. Certainly dependence is costly, but independence is purchased at a much higher price.

Out of this posture of trust and dependence comes a second concern: obedience. Dependence and obedience stand or fall together. When the treasures of this world, no matter their form, claim a higher allegiance than God, radical obedience and dependence become impossible. Singleness of heart demands the acclaim of one voice—the voice of God.

But the message of Matthew does not end here. When the focus of the heart is undivided, the ramifications begin to spill over into the rest of life. Thus the singular heart demands a singular eye.

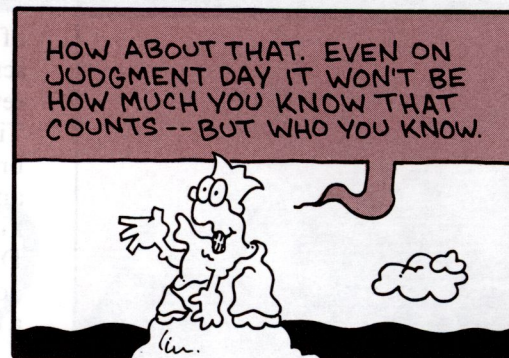
Singleness of sight

It is not surprising to discover that Matthew's reference to the single eye is set within the context of the treasures of one's heart. As the heart determines the focus, the eye determines the fixation. When sight is set directly upon an object, and the vision is pure or single, all else falls into clear perspective. Other voices may call—the need for acceptance, the need for wealth, the need for security—but they cannot deter the single allegiance. However, if the vision wavers in direction and is fixed on no one singly, nothing is seen clearly. The man is divided.

Thus the focus upon heavenly treasures suggests a certain blindness to earth's values. The voices of earth cry for a self-consciousness; the voice of heaven asks for a self-blindedness. Such a perspective does not infer a total inability to see. Rather it lays open to the seeker a

Pontius' Puddle

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condition wherein one's vision is so conscious of and fixed upon God, that all sense of self-consciousness is lost from sight. Reference to Matthew's gospel reveals the issue at stake: "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness" (6:22-23, KJV).

Here is unveiled the single vision: an eye fixed upon the treasure of Christ and his kingdom, to the negation of self and its demands. When the eye is evil or double in vision, the whole course of one's life will emulate that evil.

Yet even as this truth is realized, an inner struggle clamors for attention: if blindness brings a loss of freedom in the earthly realm, is this not also true in the spiritual realm?

Experience has taught a different lesson. The beauty of the paradox of losing life lies within its liberation. The chains of bondage are gripping when I worry about what others think of me, when I *have* to be liked, when I *have* to succeed. The liberation of losing self lays down the crushing burden of the opinion of others, it relinquishes the pressure of getting ahead, it releases the demands for more.

The mirror of Scripture raises the question, what *is* my vision fixed upon? Are my eyes blinded to all else by a flaming vision of God? Do I see him with a single eye which permeates all aspects of my life? Do I see God?

The query cannot be avoided or excused, for the focus of my eye, the focus of my heart, will ultimately be

revealed in the focus of my service.

Singleness of service

The story is frequently told of the young man learning to plow a field who, despite his valiant efforts, could not keep the furrow straight. After two lengths he threw down the traces and sought out some advice. The old farmer grinned in silent laughter upon hearing the question. "What are you looking at as you plow, son?" he asked. "Why, the oxen, of course," came the reply. "There's your difficulty. The secret is to keep your eyes fixed on a solid object—the rock at the end of the field. Do not take your eyes off it and your furrow will be straight."

The secret remains the same in the spiritual realm. When the eye is set upon heavenly treasures, the singleness of sight will dictate a singleness of action. Efforts to serve two masters will result in a divided life and half-hearted service. The devotion which Scripture espouses cannot be reconciled with half measures.

The "treasures" are the primary focus once again. What holds that highest position in my heart? The answer must be singular; no one can serve two masters. When my devotion is divided, something must suffer; to the degree we say "yes" to what the world offers, we weaken our "yes" to Christ.

The mirror reveals your reflection. Are you willing to look and, if necessary, to change? Do not respond rashly. The danger arises of words slipping lightly through one's lips without a real impact upon one's life. The single eye which begets a single service has far-reaching ramifica-

tions, for a deliberate double meaning is conveyed in Matthew's words. Primarily the metaphor of the single sight denotes a life totally devoted to the service of God. However, it was also used to convey the idea of generosity. Undivided loyalty suggests a detachment from material concerns and consequently a spirit of generosity. The two themes are closely intertwined. The "evil eye" presents a strong and startling contrast.

The focus of our lives is not our personal business; God is intimately involved. I cannot live as I please. The Gospels reveal there is too much at stake. As God is the single source of my service, the passion to possess for self must wither, replaced by a compassion to provide for others. It is no longer *my* money or *my* possessions—they are a trust. My treasure lies in heaven.

Francis of Assisi entered into a lifestyle which many would call fanatical. But his response was in obedience to the call of God. Can we say the same for our service? Is it forced from a determined effort to serve two masters—to strive to measure up to the standards of success set by man and yet satisfy the standards of singleness set by God? Such an attempt will end in failure for one master.

God may not be directing to follow the same route as Francis took, but he is calling to a single heart, a single eye, a single service.

To the degree we say "yes" to another Master, we weaken our "yes" to Christ. What is the mirror reflecting of your life? ■

Making a Statement

by Harriet Bicksler

How does a church go about formulating a statement on the church's response to a given contemporary social issue? Two possible approaches come to mind.

One approach is for the board to whom the preparation of the statement is assigned to organize lots of regional and grassroots discussion groups to talk about the issue and what elements ought to go into a formal statement. The information gathered during those discussions is then used in the writing of a draft which is sent back to the same groups for responses. Based on those responses, the statement is edited, and a final version prepared and sent to General Conference. Ideally, with this approach many people will have direct influence on the formation of the statement and so will feel a sense of ownership of both the process and the content of the statement before it ever goes to conference.

A second approach is for the board to consult people with expertise on the subject, write a statement based on the information provided by those experts, and present it to General Conference for approval. With this approach, general church ownership comes *after* Conference approval as the calls to action are implemented in local congregations and communities.

Of the six statements that the Board for Brotherhood Concerns has prepared to date, five have fol-

lowed the second approach. Statements on "Abortion" and "Pornography" were approved in 1986, on "Lotteries and Gambling" and "Health Care Decisions at the Beginning and End of Life" in 1988, and one on "The Church's Response to Those Affected by AIDS" is coming to the 1990 General Conference. A sixth statement—on militarism—will also be presented to the 1990 Conference.

The process for the preparation of this "Statement on Militarism" has been a combination of the two approaches. Because the topic of militarism is complex and impinges on theological beliefs and biblical interpretation about which there is significant diversity of opinion in the Brethren in Christ Church, the Board for Brotherhood Concerns (BBC) early on decided to use a different process.

During the biennium following the BBC's assignment to facilitate dialogue on "the whole area of militarism and church/state issues" (1986-1988), the board collected materials on militarism from a variety of people with specific expertise on this issue. Dick Zercher, a member of the BBC, and his wife Luann were assigned the task of sorting through all the material and compiling a study paper on militarism. The resulting "Study on Militarism" was distributed to all members of the 1988 General Conference with the request that it "be used as a discussion piece during this biennium" (1988 *Minutes*, p. 95).

In the spring of 1989, a survey was sent to all pastors by way of the bishops' newsletters and to a number of other people soliciting specific response to the "Study on Militarism." Seventy-seven people responded to that survey, 45 of whom included comments which were useful in the development of the first draft of the formal statement. The first draft was sent in August 1989 to all members of the Board for Brotherhood Concerns and the Board for Ministry and Doctrine, all bishops and the General Secretary, all chairpersons of the regional Boards for Brotherhood Concerns, and to 38 other people selected for their various perspectives, including ones which would be different than the ones presented in the statement. Twenty-eight people responded to the first draft, which was then revised and sent in December 1989 to the Board for Brotherhood Concerns, all bishops, regional BBC chairpersons, and a smaller number of additional people. The responses to the second draft were used in the preparation of a third draft which the Board for Brotherhood Concerns vigorously debated and revised at its February meeting. A fourth draft was approved by the BBC and then submitted to the General Secretary for inclusion in the 1990 General Conference agenda.

In addition, readers of *Shalom!* (the BBC's quarterly publication) were invited in the Summer 1989 and Fall 1989 issues to write for a

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The author is a part-time staff person for the Board for Brotherhood Concerns.

Making a statement

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copy of the statement and/or to send their suggestions regarding the process and content of the statement to any member of the BBC. The May and June 1990 editions of the bishops' newsletters encourage pastors to discuss the proposed statement in their congregations *before* Conference. The entire Spring 1990 issue of *Shalom!* is devoted to the subject of militarism, including excerpts from the statement itself as well as perspectives on militarism which provide additional background.

But is all that enough? Have people been given enough opportunities

to influence the statement? Will the 1990 General Conference, when it considers the "Statement on Militarism" in July, feel ownership for it? I honestly don't know the answers to those questions. On the one hand, I know that many people have been left out of the process—some of whom probably would have liked to respond to drafts of the statement but were never asked. I wish we could have involved many more people. On the other hand, having been the one both to ask for feedback in a variety of ways and to sift through the responses we received, I feel as though our process has been thorough. I also know firsthand how difficult and time-consuming it is to organize and facilitate discussion

groups or to prepare a coherent statement based on many people's widely different beliefs and opinions. I believe that we have worked hard to combine the two approaches described above in a way that is both efficient and inclusive.

The complete text of the statement will appear in the Conference Agenda, which is being distributed to each congregation prior to General Conference. It is also available in manuscript form from the Board for Brotherhood Concerns. The board encourages each person to study the statement and to discuss its implications in Sunday school class and other small group settings. Excerpts from the statement follow below:

Statement on militarism

[The statement is divided into several sections: background, defining the issue, the status of militarism, biblical perspectives on militarism, the Brethren in Christ and militarism, and a call to peacemaking in a militaristic world. Because of space limitations, only abbreviated portions of the definition of militarism, the biblical perspectives, and the call to peacemaking are reprinted here.]

Defining the issue

. . . Militarism is "the predominance of the military (or armed forces) in the administration or policy of the state." A key issue is the *predominance* of military values, where national strength is viewed in terms of military preparedness and/or superiority, and military strength and force are acceptable means by which international disputes are settled. Militarism is a world view which assumes that personal, economic and national security depends on the military power of a given national-state. . . .

While the predominance of militarism has been identified as a key issue, it is also important to note that historically the Brethren in Christ have opposed participation in *all* use of military force. This "Statement on Militarism" reaffirms that position but also recognizes that the predominance of a militaristic world view in the modern world is a particular problem. We would encourage those within the church who do not fully accept the church's position to study

the impact of militarism in the world. . . .

Biblical perspectives on militarism

Because the Bible has always been and is our starting point for any discussion, we need to respond to militarism in light of biblical truth. The Brethren in Christ believe that the general movement of Scripture is against the use of military methods of resolving conflict. In Brethren in Christ theology, the wars of the Old Testament are best seen as examples of God's deliverance of his people. While both the Old and New Testaments provide guidance in our dealing with militarism, we follow the model of Jesus Christ in responding to enemies, including those who threaten our security. . . .

A call to peacemaking in a militaristic world

Individual and family responses to militarism:

1. We commit ourselves, first of all, to the practice of reconciliation in all our relationships, beginning

For a manuscript copy of the complete "Statement on Militarism," call or write to Harriet Bicksler, Board for Brotherhood Concerns, P.O. Box 246, Mount Joy, PA 17552; (717) 653-8251.

Christian Holiness Association speaks out on social issues

The 122nd annual national convention of the Christian Holiness Association met in Lexington, Ky., April 17-19. Delegates from across the country approved resolutions on abortion, homosexuality and the acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

The association went on record as being "opposed to the use of induced abortion when the mother's life is not endangered," and urged its membership to "practice the ethic of the New Testament as it bears upon human sexuality."

The CHA expressed concern about perversion that leads to homosexual acts, affirming that such acts are sinful and repulsive to a Holy God.

It also encouraged its membership to

demonstrate the spirit of Christ in dealing with the victims of AIDS, by getting involved in ministry to them.

Dr. Mildred Bangs Wynkoop received the "Holiness Exponent of the Year" award. Wynkoop, an ordained minister in the Church of the Nazarene, is an author, missionary, teacher and administrator.

Rev. Ford Philpot, a United Methodist evangelist for more than three decades, received a special Christian Service Award. He has conducted more than 600 crusades in North America and overseas. His television program "The Story," was the first religious program aired in color when it began in 1959.

Dr. Thomas H. Hermiz, president of

World Gospel Mission, Marion, Ind., succeeds Dr. Jerald D. Johnson, a general superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene, as the president of the Christian Holiness Association.

The 1990 convention was held in Lexington in conjunction with Asbury College's 100th anniversary celebration. Other participating organizations included Asbury Theological Seminary, The Salvation Army, Kentucky Mountain Bible Institute and many area churches.

Delegates and guests joined in public rallies, denominational gatherings, Bible study hours, and seminars. They heard nationally known speakers including Dr. Dennis Kinlaw, Dr. David Seamands, Dr. David L. McKenna, Dr. Melvin E. Dieter, Dr. George Hunter, III, Dr. George J. Reed, Bishop Clyde E. Van Valin, and Bishop John Byers.

with our families. Peacemaking begins in our homes. . . .

2. We recognize that a *non-materialistic lifestyle* reduces the presumed need for military responses to economic inequities and armed might to protect what we have. . . .
3. We will be alert to the possible connections between militarism and our *employment* . . . and to the *investment* policies of companies in which we invest our money. . . .
4. We will *be informed* about issues related to militarism by studying current events in the light of the Scriptures. As citizens of democracies, we will respectfully *make our views known* to our elected officials. . . .
5. We continue to endorse political efforts to *establish a Peace Tax Fund* in the United States and Canada which will provide a legal means for directing to peaceful purposes tax monies otherwise intended for military purposes.
6. We will support and/or partici-

pate in programs which address both the causes and effects of militarism and which promote reconciliation. . . .

7. Finally, we commit ourselves to *daily prayer for peace* between people and nations. . . .

Corporate Responses to Militarism:

1. We pledge to work at *peaceful, loving, and caring relationships with each other in the church*, recognizing that it is inconsistent to fight among ourselves in the church or to misuse, abuse and exploit others who are close to us while we condemn militarism elsewhere.
2. We call the Brethren in Christ Church to a *renewed commitment to peace education*. . . .
3. We call for *open dialogue in our congregations* on the more difficult issues related to militarism. We challenge individuals who disagree on matters of war and peace to talk to each other and to examine diverse convictions in the light of biblical teaching.

4. We call for *dialogue with our sister churches* in the National Association of Evangelicals, the Christian Holiness Association, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, and the Canadian Holiness Federation on the relationship between evangelism/missions and a commitment to nonviolence in resisting evil. . . .
5. We join with our Christian sisters and brothers around the world in a commitment to *the church as a global community of God's holy people* which is not divided by national, ideological, racial, or cultural boundaries.
6. Knowing that neutrality is generally interpreted as support of the status quo, we will seek courage from our corporate life as believers to work actively and intentionally to *promote alternatives to militarism*. In our corporate and private worship, therefore, we will *pray regularly for peace*. . . . ■

God at work in our world

Theatre evangelism

Curt Byers—Brentwater, London

Sean O'Sullivan is from rural Ireland and when he arrived in London 18 years ago, he was so backward he was afraid of telephones. But he got married and found a job with the post office, where he rose rapidly to a position of middle management. I met Sean because Marti befriended his wife Anne while doing evangelism in the area. His wife is a practicing Catholic, but Sean is an atheist.

Sean has so outgrown his country roots as to become one of the most culturally sophisticated people I know. So it was with great anticipation that I looked forward to going with him to see Tennessee Williams' *Orpheus Descending*.

Little did I realize that I could not have chosen a better play to attend with a sensitive and thoughtful atheist. Here

are some quotes of Tennessee Williams from the program notes.

"I think that life is meaningless unless we find something to which we can be faithful, believe in, and hold to in ourselves. . . .

"There is a horror in things, a horror at the heart of the meaninglessness of existence. . . . Life has meaning if you're bucking for heaven. But if heaven is a fantasy, we are in this jungle with whatever we can work out for ourselves. It seems to me that the cards are stacked against us. The only victory is how we take it. . . .

"Hell is yourself. When you ignore other people completely, that is hell."

Most atheists live in an illusionary oasis of hope in a desert of meaninglessness. Sean occasionally wrestles with the fact that life should have no meaning if there is no God, yet he usually manages to find a way to justify optimism.

This play did not present a Christian message to Sean, but it dealt powerfully with fundamental spiritual issues. For two hours after the show, Sean and I discussed Christ as the only answer to the questions Tennessee Williams raised. Sean's conclusion was that we need just the kind of gospel of hope of which I speak. He finds my articulation of the values of Christianity attractive and powerful. But he is convinced, for now, that both the hope and the values can be had without belief in God. Maybe it will take more theatre evangelism.

After my skin was destroyed

Masashi Furuta—Nagoya, Japan

I don't remember why and how this accident occurred. I don't know why I was given this much pain. All I know is that I saw God's work in this accident, that I met God and that I praised God. I had this accident in the early morning of November 11, 1989. The steering wheel struck my abdomen. The car roof gouged my right shoulder, peeled my skin, broke my collarbone and rib cage, and went through to the back. I was told that an ambulance came right away, but my body was trapped inside the car and they could not release me right way. The first hospital could not take me, so I was taken to the emergency center of a hospital that was quite a distance away.

My wife was notified from the hospital and left home right away. It took her three hours to get to the hospital. When I was taken to the hospital, I was in critical condition. Fortunately, a colleague of mine was near by, and he gave permission for the operation to begin. The operation was a success. Praise the Lord!

I talked to many people after the operation. Everybody told me how lucky I was; however, I knew it was the Lord that had saved my life.

After I got my Bible at the hospital, I began to read the Psalms. I had read one chapter when a physician entered the room. Although I did not recognize him, he was the doctor who had operated on me. He stood by my bed. "You were so lucky," he said. "You could have been killed."

Many Thanks from Mozambique

by Agostinho Jose Xavier

According to this recent letter from the director of the Mozambique Mission, many people there are praising the Lord. In the summer and fall of 1989, clothes were collected, packaged, and sent to Beira, Mozambique. The large container of clothes had a journey of approximately 10,400 miles, but sent with prayers, it arrived safely at its destination.

Greetings from Rev. Xavier:

Please, brethren, receive our sincere thanks for a very large container that arrived safely in Beira. How amazing and wonderful it was to receive such a great relief. We truly praise him for all this: how marvelous he is! He makes something out of nothing. Hallelujah!

The distribution of the contents was conducted as follows:

We sent 60 bales of clothes and 6 boxes of shoes to our brethren in Chimio in Manica Province. The same quantities were sent also to Quelimane in Zambezia Province. Therefore, the 60 remaining bales of clothes and the 8

boxes of shoes were distributed in Beira itself.

We estimate that about 28,800 most needy Christians were helped. Normally here in Mozambique, a family is composed of 10 to 15 people. Thus the distribution mainly depended upon the number of family members.

Please pass on our deep gratitude to the donors who made this possible. Your aid, brethren, was not only used to meet the people's physical needs, but also encouraged many Christians to prove and experience the answer to our daily prayers. Through your aid God is still doing wonderful miracles among our churches here in Beira. We are now slowly becoming known as Brethren in Christ Mission. Praise him above!

Brethren in Christ involvement in Mozambique is relatively recent. The church in Mozambique has close ties with the Brethren in Christ Church of Zimbabwe. Despite the political disturbances and poverty of Mozambique, the church is alive and vibrant. ■

After the doctor left the room, I went back to reading the Psalms. I praised the Lord, realizing that he had truly saved my life.

I wrote down in my prayers on a card with my illegible writing, "Our Lord, I thank you that I met you here. I praise and thank you that I learned that you were with me even if I was a breathing corpse. I saw your works. Hallelujah!"

Thirst

Peter Guinther—Choma Secondary School, Zambia

The concepts of thirst and finding water from above have been prevalent in my life recently, in both a physical and spiritual sense.

The rains have come significantly late this year. In the villages people greet travelers, "Is it raining in Choma?" "Is it raining at Macha?" But the truth is, it hasn't been raining much anywhere in Southern Province. The earth is dusty

dry, and the people are very concerned because growing maize is their only source of food and livelihood, but the growing season is passing by quickly without rains. Zambians have their eyes fixed on the skies, just like Americans have their eyes fixed on the stock market report.

As I visited the village of one of my fellow teachers a few weeks ago, I couldn't help feeling the desperation and anticipation of his family as they waited for the rains. I came to the village to try my hand at plowing with oxen, but the ground was just too dry. Instead of plowing, we harnessed a team of six oxen and gave the dusty field of groundnuts a good harrowing. Then at night, as we sat around the fire still burning from supper, Sam's family would teach me how to say in Tonga all the things I did that day. . . . They would also ask me questions about life in the United States and laughed when I told them I never plowed with oxen before, only with tractors.

On Christmas day, the rains finally started falling with regularity. Today is December 29th, and even now it is raining outside. I can sense a sigh of relief in both the people I meet and the earth. Never before have I had such an appreciation and thankfulness for rain like I have now.

The earth is not the only thirsting element in Zambia. Before leaving for the States on early furlough, Ray Kipe preached a sermon in Sunday school on "Thirsting for God." As I sat there listening I was impressed, not as much with Ray's sermon as with the silence and intensity with which the students were listening. One could tell that the sermon was hitting home. A fact that encourages my personal faith in God is that no matter where one may travel upon this earth, he or she will always find people who are thirsty—thirsty and searching for something beyond themselves, beyond physical reality. ■

Jesus wants our all

by Ruthie Weise

Sometimes I wonder what I am doing in college. I enjoy reading and learning about ideas, people, and happenings, yet sometimes I become anxious. Having been a short-term missionary, I become anxious to be serving the Lord in another country!

When I was a little girl, at the age of seven, I knew that I wanted to be a missionary. I read missions books written for children and longed to have some of the exciting challenges and dangerous adventures experienced by the missionaries. I thought it would be quite a glamorous occupation! I knew that missionaries must be important people if so many books were written about them. I must admit, as a child I thought, "If I become a missionary, surely someone will write a book about me."

As I grew older, my missionary zeal faded. However, at the same time, I was learning more and more about Jesus Christ. I was gaining *head-knowledge*

but not *heart-knowledge*. Looking back, I realize that God was working in my life. As I sought him, he led me to pursue a college education. I decided to attend Messiah College.

A couple of weeks before I left for Messiah, I attended a missions conference at my home church. At the conference, I was convinced that I needed to stop *learning about* Jesus only, and start living for Jesus. I needed to give the apathy and laziness that was such a hindrance in my life over to the Lord so that God could change me. I decided to give every part of my life to him. Jesus wants our all.

The Lord was not going to allow me to back out of my decision. At college, the Lord placed many godly people in my life who both inspired me and challenged me to change and grow for the Lord's benefit. I learned that serving God, obeying him, and following him are of utmost importance.

The missionary zeal I experienced as a child began to come back. At a prayer retreat I attended, I noticed a display giving information on summer service projects. I was reminded of Matthew 9:37 which tells us that "the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few." Fol-

lowing the Lord's leading, I decided to go to India as a short-term missionary.

As I prepared for India, I had expectations of exciting times, just like I had read about as a child. Once I was there, I learned that the God that cared for me was the same God that cared for the Indian people, and that really made us alike. Though on the surface people are very different, at the heart we are all the same.

After I returned from India, I realized that serving the Lord did not end with my summer experience. Serving the Lord is a daily requirement. If I am going to serve the Lord in the future, I must be a servant now.

Even though I still wonder sometimes what I am doing in college, I look back and am thankful that I am here. The Lord is preparing me for a lifetime of serving him. I am looking forward to being a part of the Lord's ministry, realizing that "in his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps" (Proverbs 16:9).

The best preparation for serving the Lord in the future, is to be serving him now, living each day for him! ■

Ruthie Weise is a junior history major at Messiah College who spent a summer with Pioneers in India. If you are interested in how you might serve, contact Brethren in Christ World Missions, P.O. Box 390, Mt. Joy, PA 17027.



Our chairs were arranged in a circle. It was Sunday morning at the Christian Retreat Center and we had gathered in Mt. View Lodge for a time of worship and looking into God's Word. There was a sense that God wanted to minister to those of our group who were hurting or dealing with other burdens.

After a time of singing hymns we began to share some of our distresses with each other. One brother asked us to pray for him. He had just recently lost his wife of 48 years and was having trouble dealing with the loss. He wept openly as he told us of their close relationship. We were all humbled by his genuineness.

He then told the story of how he was

caught in a snow storm one night on the way home from work. It was two or three o'clock in the morning when he finally arrived. As he came up the sidewalk, he saw his wife looking out the window. She had faithfully waited for him all those hours. He said that she often did that and how he now missed seeing her at the window waiting for him. The house was so empty without her.

Just then a person in our group looked at him and said he believed she is still standing at the window, only now the window is heaven. "She is watching out the window of heaven, waiting for you to be called home to her," he suggested. That one statement ministered

Why a Christian Camp?

by Bud Wagner

to our brother that day. As we went to prayer for him, we felt God beginning to heal a broken heart.

The Christian Retreat Center ministers not only to people well along in years, but also to those in middle age, teen years, and childhood.

On a hot afternoon we met in the Administration Building. Our Pioneer Camp of July 1989 was in progress with our summer ministry to youth. As the counselors, program director, and I came together, we remarked how well the week was going. The kids were behaving well, there were no injuries, and from all outward appearances we were having a great time.

But several of us also sensed that the kids were not responding well spiritually. Oh, they were listening in the worship and teaching times, but many were not taking it seriously. We decided to have a special time of prayer for our evening service.

As we began to pray, each of us asked the Lord for his guidance and wisdom. We knew that unless we had his help, the evening would end like the others. Our program director, Dan Dougherty, wept before the Lord and asked for forgiveness. Dan wanted to make sure he was not the cause of anything going wrong. We were all touched by his leadership and sensitivity, and each of us in turn asked the Lord for forgiveness.

As we assembled that evening, the Lord honored our prayers and several youth received Christ as their Savior. Also, many rededicated their lives to him. There was such an openness to spiritual things. Some kids were asking how they could get along with their parents better. Others confessed to swearing and said they would no longer do this or be with friends who influenced them to swear. We had much to thank the Lord for that evening.

As I came back to the Administration

Executive Director Position Available

Applications are being received for the position of Executive Director for a new children's curriculum for use in congregations. This is a cooperative project of the Mennonite Church, General Conference Mennonite Church, Church of the Brethren, and Brethren in Christ.

Qualifications for the assignment include experience in curriculum development, organizational and management skills, training in biblical studies, and active membership in the congregational life of one of the participating denominations. The position is full-time for a period of three years. It is preferable for the person to be located in the vicinity of one of the publishing houses of the cooperating partners. The position begins September 1990.

Apply in writing immediately to Laurence Martin, Mennonite Publishing House, 616 Walnut Ave., Scottsdale, PA 15683. Include a resume and a brief paragraph telling your reason for applying for the position.

Building later that night, I received a phone call from one of the leaders at the Cedar Grove Brethren in Christ church. He told their Men's Fellowship had met that night and felt a burden for us, so they had a special time of prayer for our youth group. I shared with him how the Lord had saved several kids that same night and how open they were to spiritual truths. We were both thankful for the power of prayer and how it can change lives.

These stories illustrate why the Christian Retreat Center exists. Many more stories could be shared. The camping ministry is unique in many ways when compared to local congregations, and yet our goals are one and the same. We are endeavoring to lead people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and allow for growth in that relationship for those that know him as Savior.

I'm personally thankful for the vision the Allegheny Conference has had in starting a camp like the Christian Retreat Center. It's a place where kids are sometimes able to observe their parents in a two-hour worship setting on a Sunday morning. It's a place to meet new friends and have ongoing relationships. Some of our youth and counselors from Pioneer Camp have stayed in touch for over six years by writing one another. It's also a place where rental groups can come and have times of relationship building and seasons of refreshing with each other and the Lord.

It's a Christian Retreat Center—a celebration of God's creation, where the warmth, the love of Christian fellowship, and the acceptance of God abounds.

Established in 1978 by the Allegheny Conference, the CRC is a 238-acre camp near East Waterford, Pa., north of the Willow Hill exit of the Pennsylvania Turnpike. The author is camp director.

The Way of Peace



Announcing

A CELEBRATION OF CONSCIENCE

August 3-5, 1990

Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA

A celebration of 50 years of the continuing witness against war

1990 is the 50th anniversary of the Nazi invasion of Western Europe during World War II. 1990 is also the 50th anniversary in the United States of the Burke-Wadsworth Act which provided for civilian direction of alternate service. On October 5, 1940, the National Service Board for Religious Objectors was founded, formalizing cooperative work between historic peace churches and others to devise the agreement with government that became Civilian Public Service. Many people, including many Brethren in Christ, worked during and after World War II in Civilian Public Service camps, witnessing through alternate service to their conscientious objection to war.

The Celebration of Conscience Conference will feature worship, sharing, fellowship, exhibits, special speakers, forums and workshops on issues such as "Witness in the 1990s," "Religious Liberty and the Rights of Conscience," "Peace Studies," "Peace and the Environment," "What Do I Believe About War?" and "Conscientious Objection and Spirituality."

The conference is sponsored by a variety of organizations. The Brethren in Christ Church is represented in the planning through its membership in Mennonite Central Committee's U.S.

Peace Section. The cost is \$125 (\$45 for commuters).

For further information or to register, write to the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors (NISBCO), Suite 750, 1601 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009. Or you can write to the Board for Brotherhood Concerns, P.O. Box 246, Mount Joy, PA.

The Way of Peace column is a project of the Board for Brotherhood Concerns.

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18th Annual HYMN SING

Ringgold Meetinghouse
 Ringgold, Md.
 July 29, 1990 - 6:00 p.m.

Church News

Allegheny Conference

Ventriloquist Steve Engles and friends entertained at the May 17 mother-daughter banquet of the **Air Hill** congregation, Chambersburg, Pa. • Five persons were baptized Apr. 1 at the **Antrim** church, Chambersburg. • On Apr. 22, Simon and Betty Lehman shared with the **Big Valley** congregation, Belleville, Pa., about their visit to Venezuela. • The **Carlisle**, Pa., congregation received 24 new members on Apr. 8. The Keenagers met Apr. 19 for a noon meal and entertainment by the Happy-Tones, 10 senior ladies from Newville. • Ralph Hock spoke in a pulpit exchange in April to the **Cedar Grove** congregation, Mifflintown, Pa. Leona Shellenberger was honored recently for having served as treasurer for 11 years. The film "Flying High" was shown Apr. 15.

The **Chambersburg**, Pa., church is reporting a 1990 average worship attendance of 330, 52 over the 1989 figure. • David Climenhaga was guest speaker for the Easter sunrise service of the **Colyer** congregation, Centre Hall, Pa. • On Apr. 11, Milt Maiman from the Messianic Hebrew Christian Fellowship gave a common meal and Passover demonstration for the **Cumberland Valley** congregation, Dillsburg, Pa. The film "Jesus" was shown Apr. 15. • Clydesdale's "The Victor" was presented Apr. 15 by the adult and junior choirs of the **Fairview Ave.** church, Waynesboro, Pa. • Ray and Darlyss Kipe spoke Apr. 1 to the Five Forks congregation, Waynesboro, and were honored at a post-service luncheon. Six members were received Apr. 8.

On Apr. 28 a mini-seminar for senior adults was held with speaker Henry Ginder at the **Grantham**, Pa., church. • Wilbur Benner preached and the Hoppers sang for the Apr. 27-29 revival meetings of the **Green Spring** church, Newville, Pa. • Al Turoczi of Trans World Radio spoke Apr. 1 to the **Hollowell**, congregation, Waynesboro, Pa. • On

May 13 the Orville Hade family shared with the **Iron Springs** congregation, Fairfield, Pa., about their plans to serve with MCC in Bangladesh. Bijoy and Manjula Roul from India spoke on May 27. • On May 6, the **Marsh Creek** (Howard, Pa.), **Cedar Heights** (Mill Hall, Pa.), and Montoursville, Pa. (Atlantic Conf.) congregations planned a joint hymn sing. • The **Martinsville**, Pa., congregation presented the Easter cantata, "Jesus Lives." On May 6, Paul Hostetler gave the slide presentation "Who Are the Brethren in Christ?"

Four Sunday evening services were planned in April, May, and June to help the members of the **Mechanicsburg**, Pa., church understand and feel more comfortable with the dynamics of a large, growing congregation. • Bishop Charlie Byers was Easter speaker for the **Messiah Village** congregation, Mechanicsburg. • John Schock led revival services Apr. 22-29 for the **Montgomery** congregation, Mercersburg, Pa. • A concert by blind pianist Duncan Holmes was the highlight of May 6 for the **Morning Hour Chapel** congregation, East Berlin, Pa. • Apr. 21 was "hire a youth" day for the **Mt. Rock** congregation, Shippensburg, Pa. Don and Shirley Frymire spoke about missions on Apr. 25.

The **New Guilford** church, Chambersburg, Pa., gave the Palm Sunday cantata "I Am" on Apr. 7 and 8. On Apr. 28 and 29, the Kids Choir presented "Kids' Praise 7: Psalty's Hymnological Adventure Through Time." • On Apr. 8 the teens of the **Redland Valley** congregation, York Haven, Pa., presented the drama "A Thief or a King." • Charles Lehman spoke Apr. 29 as part of a preaching exchange at the **South Mountain Chapel** congregation, Shippensburg, Pa. • The **Van Lear** congregation, Williamsport, Md., scheduled an Easter egg hunt for the children on Apr. 14. On May 20, the congregation joined the **Paramount** congregation, Hagerstown, Md., for the film, "Molder of Dreams."

Atlantic Conference

The **Community Bible** congregation, Sarasota, Fla., had their fourth annual sitdown dinner and communion on Good Friday. • "Living as God's Family" was the theme of the Apr. 20-22 retreat at Kenbrook of the **Cross Roads** congregation, Mount Joy, Pa. It featured seminars, youth sessions, a panel discussion of Christians in the marketplace, and Paul Nisly speaking on Christian integrity. • Lynn Roth, Director of MCC East Coast, spoke Apr. 1 to the **Fairland** congregation, Cleona, Pa. • Five persons from the **Skyline View** church, Harrisburg, Pa., recently donated four days of hard work at **Fellowship Chapel** and the VS unit in Bronx, N.Y. • On Apr. 22, Eugene Wingert presented a program of slides about Kenbrook Camp to the **Free Grace** congregation, Millersburg, Pa.

June 24 is the date set for installation of Pastor Ric Feeney and dedication of the new **Hershey**, Pa., church facility. • The **Holden Park** congregation, Orlando, Fla., had an all-church fellowship gathering on Apr. 29. • The Jews for Jesus documentary film "Still Not Ashamed" was shown Apr. 1 at the **Hummelstown**, Pa., church. • The junior high youth of the **Lancaster**, Pa., congregation served on Apr. 21 at a Habitat for Humanity open house. Church members were invited to donate daily household items. The church has welcomed into fellowship Absom Mudenda from Zambia. • The **Manheim**, Pa., church hosted the Atlantic Conference Board for Congregational Life "Worship Tune-Up Workshop: Be Sharp" on Apr. 21.

The Grove City College Choir gave a concert Apr. 5 for the **Manor** congregation, Mountville, Pa. On Maundy Thursday, the church saw the video "John on the Isle of Patmos." • On Apr. 1, Paul Hostetler showed to the **Mastersonville** congregation, Manheim, Pa., the slide presentation, "People of God . . . Reaching Out Together." The clubs program awards night was Apr. 1. • On Apr. 8, Phil Keefer spoke on stewardship to the **Millersville**, Pa., congregation. A talent night was Apr. 22. • The **Mt. Pleasant** congregation, Mount Joy, Pa., had a love feast May 6 and mother-daughter banquet May 14. • The Palmyra zoning board recently accepted the petition of the **Palmyra**, Pa., church to move forward with renovation and a proposed addition. Naomi Lederach was speaker for the Apr. 28 ladies' and girls' Spring banquet.

The Apr. 8 evening worship of the **Refton**, Pa., congregation was an organ and vocal recital by Rhoda Yost and Cyndy Moody. The Gospel Express Prison Ministry visited on Apr. 15. • Nate Krupp, author of numerous books on Bible study, evangelism, prayer, and the church, spoke Apr. 22 to the **Pequea** congregation, Lancaster, Pa. • Eleven persons were baptized and 16 received into membership on Apr. 8 at the **Skyline View** church, Harrisburg, Pa. • Arthur Climenhaga spoke and shared in a fellowship meal Apr. 29 with the **Stowe**, Pa., congregation. • The **Summit View** congregation, New Holland, Pa., enjoyed a concert by Heartsong Ministries on Apr. 22.

James Artz ordained

James Artz was ordained to Christian ministry on Sunday, April 22, 1990. The service of ordination was held at the Shenks Brethren in Christ Church, where James is the pastor.

Rev. John Arthur Brubaker preached the ordination sermon. John is pastor of the Refton Brethren in Christ Church where James began his pastoral journey with the Brethren in Christ. Bishop John A. Byers conducted the ordination service.

James' spiritual life has its roots in the United Methodist Church. His introduction to the Brethren in Christ came while attending Messiah College. Upon graduation from Messiah College, James enrolled at Moravian Seminary and graduated in 1982.



His early pastorates were with United Methodist congregations. He then came to the Refton, Pa., congregation and served as Associate Pastor. In 1988 he was installed as pastor of the Shenks congregation, near Elizabethtown, Pa.

James married Debbie Himes in 1978. They have two sons, Jamie and Robbie.

Canadian Conference

Pat Hannigan and members of the **Crystal Ridge** congregation, Crystal Beach, Ont., shared in the love feast celebration Apr. 13 with the **Bertie** congregation, Stevensville, Ont. • On Apr. 1, a group from Miller Memorial Bible Institute gave a musical drama for the **Delisle**, Sask., congregation. The church hosted the Good Friday ecumenical services. • Harold Sherk spoke and sang Apr. 12 for the **Niagara Falls** congregation, Niagara Falls, Ont. • Apr. 1 was the Pioneer Clubs celebration at the **Heise Hill** church, Gormley, Ont. The group Signature ministered in song on Apr. 8. • On Apr. 1, Pastor Dave Feick of the Superb Mennonite Church spoke on "The Last Laugh" to the **Kindersley**, Sask., congregation.

The **Lakeside Community** church, Calgary, Alb., celebrated its fifth anniversary on Easter Sunday. Included in the festivities were guest musician Dave Brillinger, special children's activities, a five-year photo display, and building dedication. • On Apr. 8, the **Massey Place** church, Saskatoon, Sask., had a church information dinner to discuss relocation possibilities, budget, and evangelism and discipling. Teacher training classes by Charlotte Sider were Apr. 4, 11, and 25. • The **North East** church, Calgary, Alb., scheduled a May 5 yard sale with 50 percent of profit going to the Greater Calgary Mission '90 with Billy Graham associate Ralph Bell. • A Gideons representative spoke on Apr. 29 to the **Oak Ridges**, Ont., congregation. The youth led the service on May 13.

Scot and Jennifer White shared a missions message on Apr. 22 with the **Ridgemount** congregation, Hamilton, Ont. • The junior Sunday school children of the **Rosebank** congregation, Petersburg, Ont., recently gave a musical program at two senior citizen homes. • The **Sherkston**, Ont., congregation had a "Jesus Is Alive" praise concert on Easter evening. Gloria Nevinger and Kim Long shared their testimonies and sang for the May 8 ladies' Spring banquet. • Willis Hunking led Holy Week services Apr. 9-13 for the **Stayner**, Ont., congregation.

An Easter sunrise service at the **Wainfleet**, Ont., church included a male chorus, guest soloist Cliff Phillips, and Ron Lofthouse preaching. The River Brethren were in concert on Apr. 22. • The **Welland**, Ont., congregation was recipient recently of a new grand piano in memory of Ethel Lickman, one of the first converts in 1922 of Welland Mission. She was greatly influential to her family and congregation. • On Apr. 1, Ernest and Jean Giles gave a slide presentation of their Russian trip to the **Westheights** church, Kitchener, Ont. Seven were baptized on Easter evening.

Central Conference

The **Ashland**, Ohio, congregation has purchased another row of four pews. The May 6 service featured an interview with Michelle Stanfield, on her way to Ireland for the summer. • The **Bethel** congregation, Merrill, Mich., recently held revival services with Mervin Potteiger, evangelist. • On Apr. 8, Paul Hess brought greetings to the **Beulah Chapel** congregation, Springfield, Ohio, from Memorial Holiness Camp, which he directs. The choirs presented the cantata "Hosanna" on Apr. 15. • On Apr. 28, Tammy Bundenthal of the **Carland-Zion** church, Owosso, Mich., spoke at the Michigan ladies' retreat on "All Stressed Up and Where Should I Go?" • On Apr. 1, Bijoy Roul

preached a missions message to the **Christian Union** congregation, Garrett, Ind. C. R. Nissley of Clearwater, Fla., filled the pulpit on Apr. 8.

On Apr. 8, the **Fairview** congregation, Englewood, Ohio, heard the testimony of member Amye Lundgren—from her rearing in an atheistic home to her conversion and work with her husband Douglas in the Cottage Industries of the Caribbean. Two were baptized on Apr. 22. • May 6 was Sunday school recognition day at the **Highland** church, West Milton, Ohio. • Warren Hoffman led an Apr. 27-29 series of renewal meetings for the **Nappanee**, Ind., congregation. While there, he met with the Bridgebuilders outreach group, patterned after his book *Secret of the Harvest*. • The young adults of the **Morrison**, Ill., congregation had a family night on Apr. 6.

Bishop-elect Louis Cober spoke on Apr. 8 to the **Pleasant Hill**, Ohio, congregation, on "Sowing the Seed . . . Expecting the Harvest." • The **Sippo Valley** and **Amherst** congregations, Massillon, Ohio, combined for an Easter sunrise service and for an April missions presentation by Tim Fretz. • The **Union Grove** congregation, New Paris, Ind., planned a VBS training night for May 20 with Dan Smith, area Child Evangelism director. • The children and youth of the **Valley Chapel** congregation, East Canton, Ohio, presented "More Than a Miracle" on Easter Sunday.

Midwest Conference

Three persons were baptized Apr. 15 at the **Abilene**, Ks., church. A puppet team, "God Trust-ers," visited on Apr. 22. • Charles Rickel led revival services Mar. 30—Apr. 6 for the **Mound Park** congregation, Dallas Center, Iowa. The Salem Mennonite youth choir presented a musical on Apr. 20. • The youth choir of the **Oklahoma City**, Okla., church took their "Kids of the Kingdom" musical on tour to the **Red Star** (Leedy) and **Bethany** (Thomas), Okla., congregations. A garage sale was planned for June 9. • On Apr. 29, Fannie Longenecker, and Danisa and Treziah Ndlovu spoke at the **Rosebank** church, Hope, Ks. • The **Zion** congregation, Abilene, Ks., had a family day on Apr. 22 at the Junction City YMCA.

Pacific Conference

On Apr. 29, the **Ontario**, Calif., church viewed the film "Ordinary Guy." The church now has two-hour "Sunday Night Live" meetings. • On Apr. 1, the **Pacific Highway** congregation, Salem, Ore., viewed two videos: one on Messiah College, and another about Joni Erickson, "Reflections of His Love." A fellowship luncheon was Apr. 22 in appreciation for the interim ministry of Frank and Lois Haskins. • Jim Nash was installed recently as pastor of the **Redwood Country** church, Grants Pass, Ore. • Tim Blevins and Rod White gave a

With summer in full swing, don't forget to mail your church bulletins. Larger churches with copious bulletin inserts should submit two or three brief statements highlighting important events. Please do not send inserts from parachurch organizations such as Dobson, Trans World Radio, etc., which do not pertain directly to congregational activities.

mini-seminar on Apr. 4, "Controlling Your Money," for the **Riverside**, Calif., congregation. A "Jesus Lives" party for the children was Apr. 14. • The **Chino**, Calif., and **Moreno** (Moreno Valley, Calif.) churches are reporting successful use with new believers of the denomination's book, *Life With God*.

For the Record

Births

Ashlin: Emily, Mar. 7; Kenneth and Susan Ashlin, Mt. Rock congregation, Pa.

Ausherman: Heath James, Feb. 23; Jim and Becky (Hess) Ausherman, Antrim congregation, Pa.

Baublitz: Emily Ann, Apr. 28; William and Glenda Baublitz, Wesley congregation, Pa.

Beckner: Clayton Samuel, Apr. 4; James and Patti (Brechtbill) Beckner, Chambersburg congregation, Pa.

Berger: Bethany Nicole, Apr. 22; Rodney and Kim (Crider) Berger, Antrim congregation, Pa.

Blair: Emily Nicole, Mar. 1; Dean and Rose Blair, Fairview Ave. congregation, Pa.

Cottle: Tyler Paul, Mar. 19; Tom and Melissa (Shehan) Cottle, Martinsburg congregation, Pa.

MCC Service positions open

Mennonite Central Committee has the following service positions open:

- Secretaries/administrative assistants in the United States and Canada (14 needed). Good relational, organizational and office skills. Need one bilingual person (Spanish/English).
- Truck drivers/canner operators (3 needed). At least 21 with license to drive semis. Team-worker, physical stamina, good relational skills. Need immediately. Based in Akron, PA.
- SELFHELP Crafts warehouse workers (many needed). Stocking supervisor, returns supervisor, order processors and packers. Two-year and short-term. Age 18 and up. No experience required.

Service positions include room, board and personal allowance. Two-year terms.

Contact Mark Sprunger, Personnel Services, PO Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500, phone (717) 859-1151.

“Cooperative Ministries is *PEOPLE!*”

(A Brethren in Christ pastor received the following letter from a mother in his congregation.)

Dear Pastor:

Your sermon on tithing last night got me to thinking about Stephanie's (her daughter, and not her real name) giving to our church in 1989.

After checking with the person who processes our offering envelope records, my husband and I arranged for our two children to start using the envelope sys-

tem (each with a set) in January 1989. We strongly urged that they give 10 percent of their allowance, and they have done that. Their income from their allowance for the year was \$130 each.

In early 1990 Stephanie received a receipt from the church for \$17, which is almost 14 percent of her 1989 income. She also did non-envelope giving to special offerings for missions and on other occasions—such as last night at church. I saw her dig into her purse and give 15 cents in the offering.

She puts us to shame!

I thought you might want to know about Stephanie. We haven't made a big deal out of this because she does give from her heart, not for the recognition. But she demonstrates that even at age 10, a child can have a plan for giving.

(signed)

P.S. She doesn't usually give on Sunday nights, so I'm sure she absorbed at least part of your sermon!

Some parents who regularly tithe their own income fail to “strongly urge” their children to tithe as soon as they have income, whether from an allowance or from earnings. In doing this they miss one of their best opportunities to establish a life-long habit of biblical Christian stewardship in their daughters and sons.

As children get older, it becomes ever more difficult to involve them in God's good plan of systematic, cheerful giving. The parental example of tithing (and like Stephanie, adding an offering) makes it relatively easy for children to happily follow Dad's and Mom's footsteps. But even with

the good example, firm hands of loving guidance are needed.

*Pastor John Hawbaker, Manor congregation, now shares two “times of overflowing blessing” among his people. The first relates to tithing. You might think the second account does not belong in a stewardship column. But not so—“Co-operative Ministries is **PEOPLE**” is our stewardship theme for 1990, and this involves people who are giving and people who are receiving! You will receive inspiration from these happenings at the Manor church in the morning and evening services of the same summer Sunday.*

Roy Hess, businessman and member of our Finance Committee, gave a three-minute talk in the morning worship services about how God led him and his wife to set up a plan to begin tithing 25 years ago when they were newly married. Roy had shared this story briefly with the Finance Committee a few months ago, and the committee asked him if he would be willing to tell it publicly. Saying yes was hard for Roy because public speaking intimidates him, but he agreed to do it. He prepared his comments thoughtfully, and the entire congregation was unusually attentive during his talk. Already we have heard positive comments that his testimonial had a strong impact on people.

In the evening we had an informal service of singing and sharing in our newly-

constructed picnic pavilion on our church grounds. The pavilion is hexagonal in shape with laminated rafters coming together into a higher center with a raised cupola, and presents a chapel-like worshipful atmosphere. The tone of the service was bright and joyful as we sang familiar choruses, listened to instrumental songs, and shared testimonies:

Michael told of his conversion three months ago when his girl friend, a Manor attender, led him to Christ. Michael had been baptized (by me) just that afternoon, and his testimony was an inspiration to all.

Several persons told of special experiences during their vacation—experiences that built their spiritual lives.

A woman told of lessons learned while

attending a special week of Bible classes in Estes Park.

A man told of witnessing to a family of four and requested prayer as the whole family seems close to a decision for Christ.

A woman told us that her four-year-old son Michael received Christ as his Savior the previous Sunday afternoon at the children's meeting at Roxbury Camp, and that a few years ago her older son Brian had also received Christ at Roxbury children's meeting!

A young boy told of his good experiences while attending Kenbrook this summer.

And on and on it went. Later one person said to me, “We really worshiped in that service.”

Dietz: Briann Elizabeth, Apr. 11; S. David and Sharon (Miller) Dietz, Manor congregation, Pa.

Dyer: Joshua Paul, Apr. 13; Ray and Corinne (Brubaker) Dyer, Millersville congregation, Pa.

Eshleman: Hannah Leah, Apr. 9; Kevin and Stephanie (Darkes) Eshleman, Mt. Pleasant congregation, Pa.

Eshleman: Kortney Paige, Mar. 20; Rodney and Kimberly (Bingamin) Eshleman, Antrim congregation, Pa.

Fisher: Kimberly Ann, Apr. 18; Glenn and Kathy (Schulz) Fisher, Manor congregation, Pa.

Fritz: Brittany Lee, Mar. 23; Roger and Cindy (Musser) Fritz, Air Hill congregation, Pa.

Heinly: Carl Philip, Apr. 23; Gary and Barbara (Mohr) Heinly, Cross Roads congregation, Pa.

Heisey: Benjamin Scott, Apr. 5; Jay and Sandy (Winters) Heisey, Cross Roads congregation, Pa.

Judnich: John Albert, Apr. 13; Albert and Anna (Hess) Judnich, Fairland congregation, Pa.

Keene: Erin Britteny, Mar. 20; Derrick and Nicola Keene, Westheights congregation, Ont.

Mansell: Douglas Jonathan, Mar. 11; John and Deborah (Peachey) Mansell, Marsh Creek congregation, Pa.

Matter: Chad Nicholas, Mar. 22; Bryan and Tammi Matter, Cumberland Valley congregation, Pa.

Motter: April Lynn, Apr. 13; Michael and Tracy (Bingaman) Motter, Hollowell congregation, Pa.

Myers: Katelyn Lucille, Mar. 21; Greg and Joni (Funk) Myers, Mt. Tabor congregation, Pa.

Rohor: Rachel Marie, Apr. 7; Warren and Terr (Ebersole) Rohor, Fairland congregation, Pa.

Shenk: Michelle Lynn, Apr. 23; Donald and Rebecca (Wenger) Shenk, Mechanicsburg congregation, Pa./Zimbabwe.

Stoner: Laura Katheryn, Mar. 31; Larry and Sharon Stoner, Morning Hour Chapel congregation, Pa.

Thrush: Brian David, Apr. 24; Robert and Diana (Emby) Thrush, Montgomery congregation, Pa.

Wagner: Andrew James, Mar. 28; Kent and Judy Wagner, Fairland congregation, Pa.

Weaver: Chelsea Elaine, Mar. 21; Timothy and Jennifer (Bitner) Weaver, Marsh Creek congregation, Pa.

Wert: Jordan Skylar, Mar. 30; David and Kelly (Heverly) Wert, Marsh Creek congregation, Pa.

Wolff: Courtney Anne, Apr. 10; Jeffrey and Lauri (Bishop) Wolff, Five Forks congregation, Pa.

Weddings

Bragunier-Plank: Janice Elvra Plank, daughter of Stella Forsythe and Roy Plank, Jr., and Walter Lee, Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. Walter L. Bragunier, Mar. 10, at the Fairview Ave. Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Lynn Thrush and Rev. M. Scott Miles officiating.

Erisman-Bierer: Carrie Renee, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James R. Bierer, Columbia, Pa., and David Arthur, son of Mr. and Mrs. C. Gordon

Erisman, Columbia, Apr. 21, at the Manor Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. John B. Hawbaker and Rev. Robert L. Sheetz officiating.

Fleming-Strunk: Victoria Strunk, Trooper, Pa., and Samuel Fleming, Trooper, Feb. 10, at the Perkiomen Valley Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Daniel Zagorski officiating.

Gearhart-Egolf: Stephanie Ann, daughter of Ralph and Lana Kay Egolf, Jr., Mercersburg, Pa., and Michael Eugene, son of Varden Gearhart and Ms. Deborah Gearhart, Greencastle, Pa., Mar. 17, at the Antrim Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Roy E. Brake, Sr., officiating.

Kauffman-Mann: Cheryl Beth, daughter of Robert and Carolyn Mann, Mechanicsburg, Pa., and Howard Duane, son of Howard and Cena Kauffman, Harrisburg, Pa., April 14, at the Mechanicsburg Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Marlin Zook and Rev. Kenneth Hepner officiating.

Murphy-Sherrill: Annette Delane, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James E. Sherrill, Jr., Waynesboro, Pa., and Larry Paul, son of Rev. and Mrs. Larry R. Murphy, Mercersburg, Pa., Apr. 28, at the Hollowell Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Robert G. Byers officiating.

Obituaries

Boyd: Lesa Patricia Lynn Boyd, born in Port Rowan, Ont., May 2, 1969, daughter of Maxwell and Rochelle Boyd, died Feb. 11. Surviving is a brother, Gerald Boyd. Lesa was a member of the Houghton Brethren in Christ Church. The funeral service was held at Verhoeve's Chapel, Langton, with Rev. John Sider and Rev. Brian Lofthouse officiating. Interment was in Fairview Cemetery.

Davis: Edith L. Davis, born Apr. 22, 1912, died Apr. 18. She was preceded in death by her husband Simon; and a daughter, Miriam. Surviving are a son, Daniel; and several grandchildren. Edith was a long-time member of the Ashland, Ohio, congregation. In the 1930s she had lived in Pennsylvania and been active at Roxbury Camp. The service was held at the Ashland church with Rev. Dale W. Engle officiating. Interment was in Chestnut Grove Cemetery.

Hohenwarter: Richard Lee Hohenwarter, born in Lancaster, Pa., May 20, 1947, son of George and Kathryn Hohenwarter, died Feb. 7. Surviving are his wife, Dreama (Mills); three daughters, Tracey Miller, Kim Eckman, and Mindy; his mother; and a brother, George F., Jr. Richard attended the Manor Brethren in Christ Church. The funeral was held at the John E. Kraft Funeral Home with Rev. John A. Brubaker and Rev. Robert L. Sheetz officiating. Interment was in Millersville Menno-nite Cemetery.

Hribal: William J. Hribal, born Mar. 3, 1926, son of Joseph and Agnes (Sidehamer) Hribal, died Sept. 1, 1989. Surviving are his wife, Genevieve (Shultz); his mother; two sons, Rockey J., and William E.; and four grandchildren. William was a retired construction worker; a Navy veteran of World War II; and a member of the Cove Lions Club and the Woodbury Brethren in Christ Church. The funeral service was held at the Salem E. U. B. Church, White, Pa., with Rev. Glenn Blackstone officiating. Interment was in Stouffer Cemetery, White.

Martin: Barbara W. Martin, born in Lancaster County, Pa., on May 13, 1893, daughter of Eli and Mary Musser, died Mar. 18. Preceding her in

death was her husband, Rev. John H. Martin. Surviving are 2 daughters, Ruth H., and Esther Heisey; 3 sons, J. Robert, Clarence J., and Aaron J.; a sister, Martha Stern; 10 grandchildren; and 5 great-grandchildren. Barbara was the first in her family to attend high school, was a graduate of Messiah Bible School and Missionary Training Home and Millersville Normal School. She taught at Messiah and Wickersham Grammar School. At the age of 60, she taught in an Amish school near Lancaster, teaching in Pennsylvania Dutch. Barbara aided her husband in pastoring, and was a wallpaperer and painter. She was a member of Messiah Village Church where the funeral was held with Rev. J. Robert Lehman and Rev. Avery Musser officiating. Interment was in Mount Tunnel Cemetery, Elizabethtown, Pa.

McPherson: Wendy Jane, born in Collingwood, Ont., May 24, 1962, daughter of George and Muriel McPherson, died Mar. 27. Surviving are two sisters, Cathy and Dorothy; and a brother, Scott. She was a member of the Stayner Brethren in Christ Church where the funeral was held with Rev. Darrell Winger and Rev. Kevin Bushey officiating. Interment was in Westchurch Cemetery, Collingwood.

Nigh: Walter Levi Nigh, born in Springvale, Ont., Mar. 10, 1941, son of Rev. Paul and Lucie Nigh, died Mar. 30. Surviving are his wife Dianne; three sons, Paul, David, and Michael; a granddaughter; his parents; six brothers, Arnold, David, Howard, Wroy, Melvin, and Robert; and a sister, Norma Sherk. The funeral was held at the Camrose Church of God with Rev. Brian Krushel officiating. Interment was in Camrose Cemetery.

Ritenburg: Howard Ritenburg, born Nov. 11, 1924, died Apr. 9. He is survived by his wife, Helen; two sons, Brian and Barry; a daughter, Joan; and eight grandchildren. He was associated with the Bertie congregation, Stevensville, Ont. The funeral was held at the William Funeral Home with Rev. Greg Funk officiating. Interment was in Ridgeway Memorial Cemetery.

Rohrer: Paul M. Rohrer, born in Englewood, Ohio, Aug. 21, 1914, son of Albert and Anna Elsie Hoke Rohrer, died Apr. 3. Surviving are his wife, Marjorie (Boyer); a daughter, Charlene Cox; a son, Larry; four sisters, Annamae Kohler, Marjorie Kott, Rachel Schildberg, and Dorcas Mitchell; and two brothers, Levi and Don. Paul was a member of the Ashland, Ohio, congregation where he had served as treasurer for several years. He retired in 1979 from P. H. Roepke and Sons as a fuel oil distributor. He and his wife had celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in February. The funeral was held at the Ashland church with Rev. Dale W. Engle and Rev. Ted Mitten officiating. Interment was in Chestnut Grove Cemetery.

Steinmetz: J. Richard Steinmetz, born in Lancaster, Pa., Sept. 29, 1923, son of James and Mildred Cox Steinmetz, died Apr. 16. Surviving are his wife, S. Kathryn (Erisman); and three daughters, Linda Marie, Kathy Ann, and Susan Jean Holmes. He was Associate Professor Emeritus of industrial arts at Millersville University. He had served as assistant department chairman, graduate coordinator, and as a member of the faculty senate. In 1978 he received an Excellence in Teaching award, was named a Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Teaching Fellow, and awarded a Distinguished Teaching Chair. He was a member of the Manor congregation, Pa., where the funeral was held with Rev. John B. Hawbaker and Rev. Robert L. Sheetz officiating. Interment was in Conestoga Memorial Park. ■

Messiah College News

Messiah graduates largest class

Messiah College graduated its largest class yet at its 80th annual commencement, held on Saturday, May 12. Of the 443 graduates of the Class of 1990, 207 received Bachelor of Arts and 236 Bachelor of Science degrees. The Management and Business Department has the largest number of graduates at 97. Next is Behavioral Science with 60, and Education with 52.

Sixteen graduates were from the Brethren in Christ Church. Following is what some of these Brethren in Christ graduates had to say about their Messiah experience.

J. Andrew Miller (Dillsburg, Pa.)—I think Messiah has developed and redefined who I am as a person. I have grown in many ways. Most importantly, I see my faith in Jesus Christ as becoming a living and real part of my life. Going to Messiah has made me into a whole person. I feel I am now a Christian man who, with God's help, is ready to face the world and the challenges which lie ahead in life.

Maurice E. Schwartz (York, Pa.)—In my first two years at Messiah I was mostly challenged in my spiritual growth. Various activities, courses, and friendships prompted me to take God seriously. I did. I was stretched. I became stronger in the Lord and more confident about myself.

My last two years at the Philadelphia campus have really expanded my thoughts and attitudes toward film. It



Anna Verle Miller, Assistant Professor of Modern Languages, was honored recently at the Messiah College Appreciation Dinner. She is retiring after 38 years of teaching: 9 years at Messiah's sister college, Upland College in Southern California, and 29 years at Messiah. She commented, "I have had the unique privilege of knowing many fine Christian students who challenged me to do my best in the classroom. They have been special friends who enriched my life in informal campus settings, as well as in my nearby home."

has been challenging, rewarding, and educational from the classroom to the city streets, to the professional video rental company where I interviewed. I would never have guessed that I would run into the obstacles I have, nor been rewarded by the open doors which have come my way either.

Jane E. Howe (Hanover, Pa.)—The past four years have been a challenging and a growing time. I learned a lot, but it wasn't easy. I not only learned about becoming a nurse, but I learned to become a better person and friend. The learning experience didn't stop in the classroom, but continued in the dorm and cafeteria. Friends made this experience bearable when the stress seemed impossible. There were always opportunities to grow academically, mentally, socially, and most important, spiritually.

Michelle Smith (Laura, Ohio)—I really thank the Lord that I was able to attend Messiah College. Not only was the Christian atmosphere an aid to my

spiritual growth, but the dorm life was stimulating to both my social and emotional growth. College helped me to see many situations and ideas in a different perspective than my young, narrow mind had previously seen. Messiah College challenged me in all areas of my life and caused me to grow spiritually, as well as academically and emotionally. The campus is beautiful as well as peaceful, and allowed for quiet reflection and admiration of God's creation in nature.

May 1990 Brethren in Christ graduates

Steven D. Allison, Political Science, Mifflintown, Pa.
 Elaine C. Baugher, Early Childhood Education, Abbotstown, Pa.
 Leann J. Beers, Political Science, Liverpool, Pa.
 Dawn M. Geib, Marketing, Schwenksville, Pa.
 Duane A. Heisey, Recreation, Elizabethtown, Pa.
 Jane E. Howe, Nursing, Hanover, Pa.
 David L. Kreider, Biology, Elizabethtown, Pa.
 Raquel D. Llanes, Psychology, Miami, Fla.
 Edwin Chi-King Lun, International Business, Fort Erie, Ontario
 Todd A. McKee, Bible, Zullinger, Pa.
 J. Andrew Miller, History, Dillsburg, Pa.
 Lori Lee Paulus Rhoades, Elementary Education, West Milton, Ohio
 Christopher D. Rich, Psychology, Sterling, Va.
 Maurice E. Schwartz, Radio, Television, and Film, York, Pa.
 Michael Sider, Humanities, Philadelphia, Pa.
 Michelle R. Smith, Elementary Education, Laura, Ohio ■



This year's commencement speaker is the current Chaplain of the United States Senate, Richard C. Halverson. Dr. Halverson was honored with the Messiah College Distinguished Public Service Award. As a leader in the International Prayer Breakfast movement, and as Senate Chaplain since 1981, Dr. Halverson has been a leading voice in calling our nation to God. Among the others who have received this honor are President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the first recipient, Malcolm Muggeridge, C. Everett Koop, and President Jimmy Carter.

Focus on the Bible

Tenth in a series written by
faculty members of Messiah College

Interpretive guidelines for reading the Epistles

by David Lee Parkyn

One afternoon there was a knock on the front door of our house. Two men were there, both members of a congregation located about a five day's journey by foot over the Cuchumatane Mountains in the midwestern highlands of Guatemala. They had come to our home primarily to seek Dad's advice concerning several issues which had been raised in the life of their church. They asked questions about particular points of Christian doctrine as well as how they should live as Christians, especially in relationship to nonChristians.

The members of this congregation, including these two men, spoke only the Ixil language, an indigenous dialect descendant of the ancient Maya culture. At the time, only selected chapters of the Gospel of Mark had been translated into this language. Consequently, the congregation had no facility for hearing God's Word. But since the Bible was available in Spanish and English, and since Dad spoke both of these languages, they came to him. He could read the Scriptures, tell them what it said, and they in turn could take the message back to their congregation.

That evening Dad sat down to write a letter to the people in this Ixil parish. In it he delineated what he thought was a proper response to the questions they

raised. In the morning the two men received the letter and departed.

Three years later I joined Dad on a trip which took us to this and several neighboring congregations. To our great surprise, Dad's letter had become an important part of the parish's tradition. Since they had no Scripture to read in their services, and since they believed Dad had written the letter based on what he believed Scripture teaches, they read the letter during each of their services, much as we read Scripture in our worship traditions. In addition, several neighboring congregations had acquired hand-made copies of the letter and used it as part of their worship services as well.

Dad's letter certainly was not Scripture. Yet it served these congregations much like the Epistles served the worship and teaching traditions of the early Church. The letter was read on a regular basis because they believed it was a means God used to speak to them. As the years passed, however, members of the congregation, and especially new converts, needed to be reminded of what was happening in the life of the congregation when the letter had been written, for without this knowledge the content of the letter could easily be misinterpreted.

Which brings us to the Epistles. These letters are nearly as difficult for us to read and understand as it would be for us to interpret Dad's letter to the Ixil congregation. This is true because the Epistles were, like Dad's letter, *occasional documents*. The Epistles arose out of the first century and were written from the context of the author to the context of the first recipients. If we are to properly understand these documents today we need to care for at least four concerns.

First, we should be familiar with the *historical context* of each Epistle. Reading an Epistle is like listening to one side of a telephone conversation. In reality we know only what one person is saying. We may not know who is listening, what relationship they have with the person whom we hear speaking, and what response is being given.

To understand the historical context of the Epistles requires us to become familiar with (1) the author of the Epis-

tle, (2) its recipient(s), and (3) the questions raised by the recipient(s) which first elicited the writing of the Epistle. Unless we are familiar with each of these it is likely that we will misinterpret the text.

Second, we must be sensitive to issues of *cultural relativity*. The social context of the author and first recipients of each Epistle is drastically different from our own. Consequently, what is said in the Epistle may need to be interpreted for our culture. An easy mistake we can make is to force irrelevant aspects of the recipient's culture on our life today. Conversely, we might also be tempted to constrain the Scriptures with our questions (e.g., about abortion, capitalism, infant baptism) when the issues being addressed by the author had nothing to do with our particular concerns. Both of these will interfere with a proper interpretation of the Epistles.

Third, we need to search for *principles and functional equivalents* if we are to properly interpret and apply the teaching of the Epistles. If the text is designed to answer their questions rather than ours we need to search for the principles which guided the development of the answers. Once we have done this we can apply the principles to circumstances in our lives which are functionally equivalent to that which was of concern to the author and the first readers. For example, while North American Christians today do not have to decide against eating with their pagan neighbors in idol temples (see 1 Corinthians 10:14-22) it is important for us to understand why Paul cautioned against this activity—namely, that to induce other Christians to join us in an activity which they personally believe to be wrong may in fact destroy their faith.

Finally, if the above issues are true, then we need to be careful to *distinguish between what is certain and what is possible*. Some interpretations are likely to be agreed upon by nearly all who study the Epistles. (For example, there is certainty about Scripture's teaching concerning the fallen nature of humankind and the redemptive activity of Christ's death and resurrection.) We can generally be certain of these interpretations and apply them widely. There are other times, however, when the issues are not

David Lee Parkyn is Associate Professor of Religion at Messiah College. He studied at the College during the early 1970s and joined its faculty in 1981 after completing degrees at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and Boston College. His principal teaching interest is in Third World Theology and he travels frequently in Central America.

so clear and when varying interpretations will be advanced. (There are various interpretations, for example, concerning what role the charismatic gifts should have within the ministry of the Church.) On these occasions, we need to be less forceful in the manner in which we assert our particular understanding of the Epistles. At these times we would

be wise to differentiate between what is made explicit in the text and what is merely implied, and to evaluate our interpretation of parts of the Epistles with the teaching of the whole Scripture.

Both Dad's letter to the Ixil people and each of the Epistles represent "task theology." They were written to a specific group in response to a specific

situation. If we are to understand them for today, we must understand the tasks to which they were addressed, and make every effort to carefully interpret them for the specific tasks before us as Christians living in North America during the 20th century.

Readers Respond

In the article reporting the publication of Dr. Dean Curry's book *World Without Tyranny*, ("Messiah College News," April 1990, p. 26), not much information is given about the content of the book itself. Note is made, however, of Curry's assertion that "Freedom is the antidote to tyranny." The article cites two reviewers who find the book to contain a "biblical perspective."

I concur with Curry that freedom is much to be preferred over tyranny, and should be sought and worked for. But I suggest that freedom is not the antidote, but is the *opposite* of tyranny. Freedom results when justice is followed by a society's leaders. Injustice leading to tyranny is an age-old problem of humankind, a result of the fallenness that has spoiled God's good creation.

Those acquainted with Curry's many writings know that he advocates that the morally proper response to the threat of tyranny is to threaten violent response so strong that the tyrant is deterred. He writes skillfully and persuasively. In reality, the antidote that Curry advocates is deterrence by threat of violence. That is an ancient human response, and is the one logical to the humanistic mind. It is significant to note that after millennia of applying this antidote, we still have tyranny threatening mankind in many places.

My reading of Scripture, acknowledging that God's fullest revelation of himself is in Jesus Christ, leads me to believe that God hates tyranny, and brings it to judgment in his own good ways and time. I also find that Jesus taught a new, a different, antidote. He also modeled it. That antidote is forgiving, suffering, non-violent love. When people respond in Jesus' way to tyranny,

they reveal whose child they are (Matt. 5:43-48).

Those who read Dr. Curry's writings will recognize that they are at variance with what the Brethren in Christ have understood the Scriptures to mean. They will do well to search the Scriptures, to find there whether threat of violent response is God's prescribed method whereby we should respond to tyranny.

Samuel M. Brubaker
Arcanum, Ohio

Circle of comfort?

I feel compelled to write in response of the article in the April *Visitor* entitled "The Circle of Comfort," by Rev. Leonard Chester. He is certainly to be com-

mended for his insight and articulation of the subject matter. After a loss, the grief, pain, despair, and depression is overwhelming, and varies with individuals for different time periods.

It appears the title and points 1-7 are in contradiction. His indepth analysis points out the links in the chain most easily broken. The Christians turn to the perceived warmth of the church as a haven. When this breaks down, they can be disillusioned and turn to other sources of comfort outside their own congregation and church.

The article ends with a grim warning: "This year my turn; next year, yours." How about something positive? Rev. Chester mentioned "support." Why not a congregational support system like those in many other fields? It should include the community as well as church people of any persuasion. The spinoff rewards to the church would be many, including increased church attendance. The "no one cares" as well as the "worthless" syndromes would not take over and drive the grieving into deeper despair.

Perhaps the problem could best be tackled at the level of church leadership. Would it not be possible at ministerial retreats to make pastors aware of their responsibility to their charges? Then on down through church boards, deacons, and finally the laity. There is a big, grieving, crying world out there waiting. Why not do it now before many more are turned off.

Thank you, Rev. Chester, for your article.

Ross F. Bearss
Ridgeway, Ontario

Contributions invited for *Dialogue* and *Readers Respond*

Persons contributing to *Readers Respond* (letters to the editor) are encouraged to be concise. Letters may be shortened. All letters must be signed. Occasionally we may decide to withhold names due to special circumstances.

Longer contributions are welcomed for *Dialogue*, a forum for readers to express their opinions on a broad range of topics relevant to the mission of the church and to living the Christian life.

Since each article or letter represents the view of the writer, they do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Brethren in Christ Church.

Dear Paul:

Recently, I wrote for your opinion on whether some forms of worship were more acceptable than others. Now I am bringing to you a more basic question, "What is true worship, anyway, and does it really matter to God?" I know that it matters to me. There is nothing like an awareness of the greatness of God to put everything else into perspective.

Before I became a Christian, it never would have occurred to me to express appreciation to God, or to think that it would have mattered to him in the least whether I did or not. Why would the mighty Creator of the expanse of the universe care whether one of the least of his creatures said "thank you"? But now I know that this same Creator is my Heavenly Father, that he chose to be-

come human flesh and to share my plight because of his limitless, self-giving love. Love calls for a loving response, Paul. When my heart is lifted up to him in love and gratitude, I trust that I am offering God a service of worship which brings joy to his heart.

Sometimes when we are singing together or gathered to partake of the bread and the wine, I realize that I am part of something much bigger than I can see or touch in a physical way. I suddenly become aware of the great volume of praise that is being offered up before the throne, and I know that my voice is raised in harmony with those of angels, archangels, and all the saints in glory. Though feeble, my praise has nevertheless become one with the pulsating praises of the universe. That part

of God's family which is already in heaven seems close, and then I know that our Heavenly Father, through the offering of his Son, has made me part of his whole family in heaven and on earth.

One of my more practical brothers said to me, "Why not save the ecstasy for Heaven? The best way to worship the Lord now is to minister to his children here on earth." I agree that obedience and service are a form of worship when done from the heart, but I am afraid that the true heart would soon go out of it if I lost the joy of praise.

It seems as though I've answered my own question, Paul, but I would still like your opinion.

In anticipation,
Onesimus

Phoebe's Journal

Men, women, and the use of gifts

About a year ago, I joined an organization called Christians for Biblical Equality, finding in it ideas that resonated with my own beliefs regarding the roles of women and men in the church and home. This past April, CBE bought advertising space in major evangelical Christian periodicals to publish their statement on "Men, Women and Biblical Equality." I had read the statement before, but was pleased to see it appear in the April 9 issue of *Christianity Today* (pp. 36-37).

After listing biblical principles on equality (with textual references) relating to creation, redemption, community, and the family, the statement lists several applications of those principles in the church and family. Because of some renewed discussion in the Brethren in Christ Church regarding women in ministry, I am particularly interested in two sentences:

1. "In the church, the spiritual gifts of women and men are to be recognized, developed and used in serving

and teaching ministries at all levels of involvement: as small group leaders, counselors, facilitators, administrators, ushers, communion servers, and board members, and in pastoral care, teaching, preaching and worship."

2. "In the Christian home, spouses are to learn to share the responsibilities of leadership on the basis of gifts, expertise, and availability, with due regard for the partner most affected by the decision under consideration."

It seems to me that the church and the home cannot help benefiting when women and men use the full range of their gifts and share leadership responsibilities in whatever sphere they're operating. I'm reminded of some of the sociological research that has differentiated between left-brain thinking (logical, analytical, linear) and right-brain thinking (intuitive, relational, emotional), and the generalizations that men tend to be left-brained while women tend to be right-brained.

Another way of saying much the same thing is to characterize—on the basis of observation of the way men and women have related in the world—certain qualities as generally "mascu-

line," and other qualities as generally "feminine." How much these differences are innate (biologically or physiologically) and how much they're the result of socialization is still not clear to me; the point is that there do appear to be some differences. (It's very important to keep in mind that these are generalizations; they are *not* universally true of all men or all women, and they do *not* imply that one type of thinking or set of qualities is better than the other.)

For me, there are clear implications for the church of the differences between men and women. I know some people might say these differences confirm that women are more suited to caring for children, for example, while men are more suited for preaching or church administration. That may be true in specific cases, but it is not always true and it deprives the church when we limit women and men to specific spheres. I would even go so far as to say that we are standing in God's way when we limit women.

When women enter the leadership levels of the church, one thing that happens is that other perspectives and approaches are brought into the mix. It

seems obvious to me that if both logical/analytical and intuitive/relational skills are applied to any process, the results will be far more wholistic. Women and men working together in leadership and ministry in the church will more likely meet the wide range of human needs that exist in any local community and congregation. Similarly, both the church and the family benefit when men assume a more active role in caring for children.

I know that this line of reasoning does not address the biblical interpretation issues related to women in ministry; it is a more sociological or pragmatic approach. At the same time, however, it has implications for the way we apply the biblical passages describing the different gifts given to Christians.

I think we believe that God gifts both women and men. Who can honestly say that God never gives women certain gifts like preaching, teaching, or leadership, or, if so, that God doesn't expect those gifts to be used in the church? What do we say, then, to women who have gifts but are prevented from using them? In what ways is the church (and the world) poorer because we have limited women to certain tasks (and, by the same token, also limited men)? How might the gospel of Christ be better proclaimed if we allow the whole range of (male and female) perspectives to be valued equally at all levels of church life?

Phoebe

The Church and Public Policy

The presentations made at the Consultation on the Church and Public Policy, held in April 1989 at Grantham, Pa., are available in printed form in the December 1989 issue of *Brethren in Christ History and Life*.

Copies of the December 1989 issue of the journal are available by mailing a check for \$5.00 per copy to Dr. E. Morris Sider, Messiah College, Grantham, PA 17027. (Please make checks payable to the Brethren in Christ Historical Society.)

Editorial

by Roger Williams

Would you understand the concepts of peaceful nonresistance, reconciliation, social consciousness, brotherhood, holiness, and Anabaptist if you had never heard the words? Language influences our ability to think, conceptualize, rationalize and communicate. Most of us think in words.

This was impressed upon me as an assistant scoutmaster in Papua New Guinea. One day, while going over the scout law ("the scout is trustworthy, loyal, cheerful, kind," etc.) the word *kind* confused some of the youngsters to whom English was a second or third language. One asked, "What does *kind* mean?" The scoutmaster, a local fellow, could not think of a word in his language that translated into kind. So he explained, "Kind is when you kill a bird quickly rather than pulling it apart a feather at a time." *Kind* was a bit more clear to the scouts; I was left with something to think about.

The scoutmaster's definition clarified some of the mystery of primitive, tribal existence. They did not know the word *kind* because the concept of kindness was not strong in their traditional value system. To introduce the word was also to introduce the concept.

The question of curriculum use in the Brethren in Christ Church is also, in my thinking, a question of concept identification. Unless our children, youth, and new adult members hear the words peaceful nonresistance, reconciliation, social consciousness, brotherhood, holiness, Anabaptist, etc., how can they develop understanding and ownership of the concepts that these words describe? For example, I was raised in the Baptist church and upon

adulthood attended Lutheran and Methodist congregations. Until meeting a Mennonite publisher I had never heard or thought of "Anabaptist" and all that that word means. Now "Anabaptist" is not just a word for me, but a belief structure that is an integral part of me and my spirituality.

Last week a Brethren in Christ pastor mentioned that the Christian Education Superintendent in his congregation feels the ease of use of a curriculum is more important in selecting curriculum—especially children's curriculum—than any doctrinal message. I thought about his statement in light of such facts as "70 percent of what we are as adults is determined by the time we are six." I always thought that statement, or some variation of it—if even only partially true—pointed like a lighthouse to where we should concentrate our efforts as a society and a church. If we really concentrated on our young people, could our society turn around in one generation? The Old Testament and New Testament both have numerous references to teaching and training children in the ways of the Lord.

We presently have a national disgrace in that an estimated one-fourth of our adult population cannot read well enough to fully function in society or the church. This is not a result of having been able to read when they were young and then forgetting the skill sometime during puberty. It is not a result of some strange disease that strikes teens and young adults. It is because they were neglected when they were children. They were, for the most part, never really taught the joys and excitement of reading. They missed out on the thrill of learning. They are the result of a culture and education system that somehow failed them at a time when they were completely depend-

The author, Roger Williams, is executive director of the Board for Media Ministries.

Evangelical Visitor

Developing an understanding and ownership of ideas

ent on parents, teachers, politicians, policy makers, etc. Like a latent virus that only shows its devastating effects later in life, the ruinous results of childhood neglect are often not noticed until adulthood.

Are we, by using generic curriculum materials for our children and youth, laying the foundation for a latent virus that destroys one's roots and causes a loss of identity? Is there the likelihood that future generations of Brethren in Christ will not understand either the word or concept of brotherhood?

An axiom that I've heard repeated often lately is "What goes around comes around." I think it is similar to Paul's admonition in Galatians 6:7, "A man reaps what he sows." Does a denomination reap what it sows? There is growing demographic evidence that the "Baby Boom Generation" is "returning" to the church for spiritual fulfillment. I'm emphasizing the word "returning" because the church was a part of their lives as children, then they left the church because of many reasons, as youth have tended to do for many generations. Also for many generations, as adults they have eventually "returned" to things of their childhood. "What goes around, comes around." "A man reaps what he sows." If we teach some sort of generic, non-denominational curriculum to our children, what will come around when they come back to church? Will it be a generic, non-denominational approach to Christianity?

Of course, a major issue in this debate is whether or not there is a "Brethren in Christ Curriculum." If there is not, then the question becomes moot. The Brethren in Christ Church has roots in both the Wesleyan holiness and Anabaptist traditions. The Brethren in Christ perspective on these theologies is pointed

out in the title of Carlton O. Wittlinger's history of the Brethren in Christ Church, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*. Bishop Owen Alderfer recently wrote an essay titled "Anabaptism as a 'Burden' for the Brethren in Christ," which is a part of the book, *Within the Perfection of Christ*. In that essay he states, "Decided effort has been expended across two centuries to preserve the balance," i.e., between piety (Wesleyan "warmheartedness") and obedience (Anabaptism). These unique doctrines are found in various degrees in each Brethren in Christ congregation.

Bishop Alderfer further stated, "The genius of the Brethren is in the delicate balance of the two emphases. . . ." The balance of these doctrines is what has made the Brethren in Christ distinctive. Without broadly accepted denominational distinctives that are consistently evident in our various congregations, we risk becoming congregationalists with each congregation doing its own thing.

The Foundation Series and the Wesley Biblical Series are the only curricula that have editorial input from Brethren in Christ authors, editors and representatives. Brethren in Christ writers are used, especially in the Foundation Series. Evaluators have found that the Foundation Series is the only curriculum that has a consistent peace message throughout. How else can we as a denomination have our own curriculum? We are neither large enough nor wealthy enough to produce our own products. We do, however, promote two curricula that address our historical distinctives. However, for one reason or another we fail to use them in significant amounts across the denomination.

Difficulty of teaching has been identified as a problem with the Foundation Series. This has not

been a complaint concerning the Wesley Biblical Series. The Foundation Series Publishing Council has put considerable effort into correcting the difficulty-of-teaching question as products are revised or new products are introduced. What is presently on the market is much better than the first-published materials. It is still not a curriculum that can be presented without adequate preparation. No curriculum with depth is. But, it is not as difficult as it once was and deserves consideration.

Like the young scouts in Papua Niugini, if you have never been confronted with the issue, you can never consider it. To explain who we are implies that we know who we are and have gone through some sort of process of identification. Curriculum helps in this process, and is, I believe, important early in life. A common question when telling people that one is a member of the Brethren in Christ Church, is "Who Are The Brethren in Christ?" Dr. E. Morris Sider wrote a book by that title to help answer the question. The book was primarily written to inform non-Brethren in Christ. Will it become a book to answer the question we are asking ourselves?

Using the Foundation Series and/or Wesley Biblical Series is obviously not the full answer to a complicated question. However, who the Brethren in Christ will be in the future will most surely be significantly influenced by the curricula we use in our congregations today. The concept of doctrine must be considered seriously in curriculum selection. It cannot simply be a matter of price and convenience. "The Quest for Piety and Obedience" as a people of God should be promoted within our denomination by using curricula that promote the doctrines of piety and obedience. ■

The church and the family

by J. Ralph Wenger

The oldest societal structure today is the family. It shares this similarity with the church: since the Lord ordained the church and since he is its head, it is expected that the church will outlast and outlive any other religious structure. The family, being a God-given structure, will also outlast and outlive any other societal structure.

While we have reason to believe the family will continue to exist, we also need to understand that no other societal structure has come under more stress and attack. If the family structure is to continue to function and be strong, the church must take some drastic steps to bless the family. (The family referred to here includes nuclear, single, and adopted families. It is not always possible for all components of the nuclear family to be present in every situation.)

What are our assumptions about the role and durability of the family? What are the reasons for sustaining and maintaining this structure? How can we build rather than destroy this most important organism? Maybe we can find some answers to these questions.

Historically the church has looked positively upon the role and durability of the family. The church has taught and experienced vital family structures. But it is evident that the church is opening its doors to the voices which question the role the family has to play in God's scheme of things. In some instances the church has allowed the enemy to infiltrate its ranks with those who believe the family is one of the worst enemies of our society.

We cannot continue to allow these forces which seek to destroy to infiltrate

the ranks. By this I mean the doctrine, education, and practice of the church cannot afford to condone or foster this attack on the home. It calls for an intentional proactive stance by the church to combat the eroding of this basic institution.

What can the church do? Let me suggest four things:

1. The church needs to affirm a solid commitment to the biblical foundation for the family. Our cultures and different sociological factors have impacted the family, but we must continually bring ourselves to the foundation which God himself laid down for the family. The family order originated with God. We will affect this goal when our theology includes the family in our beliefs and practices. The new doctrinal statement has picked up on this concern and does give us focus in making this a priority.

2. The church must include in her beliefs and practices the fact that the family is vital to the church and society. Beyond our commitment to the biblical foundations for the family, we need to integrate into our faith and practice the place and vitality which the family holds for society and the basic Christian community. If the church is to reproduce strong and vibrant leadership, it is imperative that the family units in their several forms be strengthened. They must be strong for creative leadership to emerge. I am not thinking of professional leadership only, but a strong believer/citizenry enabled and empowered to live out the moral and spiritual strengths which our societies need.

3. The church must commit to quality parenting as a vital contribution to society. It is apparent that there are other contributions which impact our society for good, but none more so than quality parenting. A human being can give no better or more special contribution than being part of the quality parenting of a child. I recognize that some family units are without children. They

will seek other ways to make vital contributions. The church needs to again lift this vocation in life to its rightful place. Too often parenting has been laid aside for seeking our own interpretation of what a vital contribution to our society really is.

4. The church must commit her resources to strengthen the family. The church should stand ready to assist with strengthening the family. This must start with the local body and flow throughout the larger body of believers. The Brethren in Christ have historically and structurally intended to provide assistance for the family. We need to continue. This calls for a large and intentional commitment for now and into the future. It will require resources of both people and finances for us to accomplish this herculean task.

Let us head into the face of the wind and seek to accomplish this task. The family is resilient. It does not need to take generations to turn this around. It does not need to take years to teach good parenting methods. It does take the lifetime of the child to accomplish this. The rewards and benefits derived are eternal and most gratifying.

I call for our leaders to apply the energies and resources required to turn our families into the viable societal structure God intended. Pastors, deacons, and local leaders, you will do your congregation a great service to assist people in strengthening the family. There is no other earthly engagement in Christian service which can outstrip it in value and rewards. I believe the church wants to strengthen the family. I for one want to commit myself to this end.



J. Ralph Wenger is bishop of the Pacific Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church.

1713 LT75
Earl E Herr
RD 1 Box 278
Martinsburg PA
USA 16662

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